TWELVE NAVAL CAPTAINS

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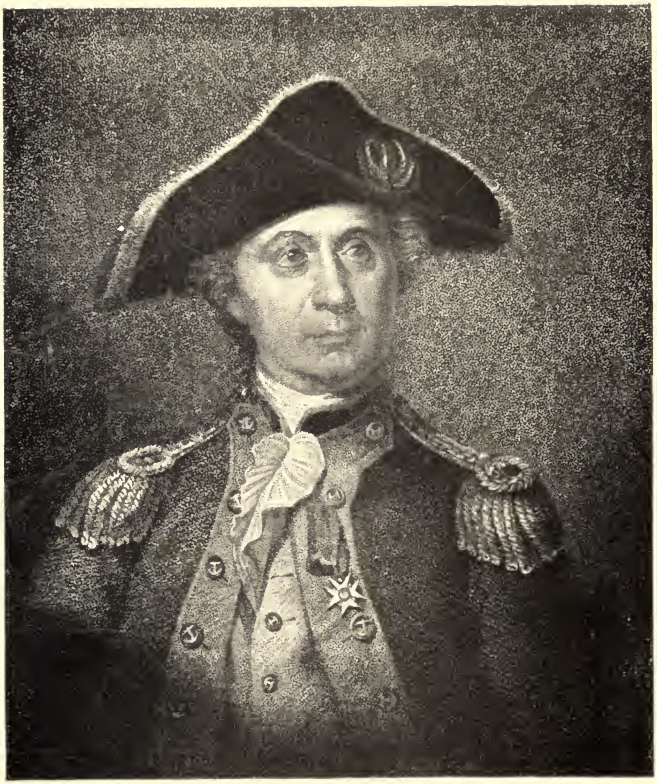

TWELVE NAVAL CAPTAINS

Being a Record of Certain Americans who made themselves Immortal

BY

MOLLY ELLIOT SEAWELL

AUTHOR OF

"THE SPRIGHTLY ROMANCE OF MARSAC," "THE HISTORY OF THE LADY BETTY STAIR," "CHILDREN OF DESTINY," "THROCKMORTON," "LITTLE JARVIS," ETC.

WITH PORTRAITS

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TO WIN
AMERICA

PREFACE

In offering this book to the youth of the country, the writer does not wish it understood as a comprehensive record of American naval captains from 1776 to 1815. It is merely a selection of twelve commanders who had great opportunities, and were equal to those opportunities, from the long list of brave and deserving officers, especially during the brilliant period from 1798 to 1815.

The writer desires to express the deepest obligations to Cooper's Naval History and Naval Biographies. If those noble and beautiful books were read at the present day as they deserve to be read, there would be little reason for any modern author writing upon the same subjects.

A faithful effort has been made to copy Cooper's admirable impartiality. He says, justly, in speaking of the captures on each side made in 1812–15, "No vessel was unworthily given up." It is perhaps unfortunate for the good-will which should

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exist between kindred nations, like the United States and Great Britain, that the naval and military glory of the early years of the republic should have been gained almost wholly against Great Britain. But an unprejudiced view will soon show that much of the fierceness of the fighting was due to the closeness of the tie of blood. There was but a slight foreign element among the Americans who sustained themselves so gallantly from 1776 to 1815; and this foreign element, instead of modifying those Anglo-Saxon characteristics which are the common heritage of Americans and British alike, was brought into subjection to the Anglo-Saxon standards of laws, customs, and language. The Americans of American stock take the liberty of believing and saying that every generation nurtured under American institutions is a distinct advantage; and those Americans whose ancestors at their own pleasure cast off the rule of England have no grudge against the mother country, but rather the utmost good-will and cordial friendship. The youth of the country should realize that a ceaseless whine against England is very un-American. The Americans never whined. They made a stout protest, followed by a bold defiance

and a great and successful fight, then shook hands and made it up.

The writer offers this book with diffidence, but trusts that the inherent virtue in the men and events treated of may make the record of interest.

MOLLY ELLIOT SEAWELL.

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PAUL JONES

American history presents no more picturesque figure than Paul Jones, and the mere recital of his life and its incidents is a thrilling romance. A gardener's boy, he shipped before the mast at twelve years of age, and afterward rose to be the ranking officer in the American navy. His exploits by land and sea in various parts of the world; his intimacy with some of the greatest men of the age, and his friendships with reigning sovereigns of Europe; his character, of deep sentiment, united with extraordinary genius and extrême daring, — place him among those historical personages who are always of enchanting interest to succeeding ages. Paul Jones himself foresaw and gloried in this posthumous fame, for, with all his great qualities, he had the natural vanity which so often accompanies the self-made man. He lacked the perfect self-poise of Washington, who, having done immortal things, blushed to have them spoken of, and did not deign to appeal to posterity. Paul Jones was continually appealing to posterity. But his vanity was that of an

honest man, and he was often stung to assertiveness by the malignities of his enemies. That these malignities were false, and that he was a man of lofty ideals and admirable character, is shown by the friends he made and kept. Dr. Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Morris, and Lafayette lived upon terms of the greatest intimacy with him; Washington esteemed him, — and the goodwill of such men places any man in the category of the upright.

Nothing in the family and circumstances of Paul Jones indicated the distinction of his later life. His father, John Paul, was a gardener, at Arbigland, in Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland, where Paul Jones was born in 1747. He was named John Paul, for his father; but upon his taking up his residence in Virginia, in his twenty-seventh year, he added Jones to his name, — for some reason which is not now and never has been understood, — and as Paul Jones he is known to history. The Pauls were very humble people, and Paul Jones's childhood was like the childhood of other poor men's sons. Boats were his favorite and only playthings, and he showed from the beginning that he had the spirit of command. He organized his playfellows into companies of make-believe sailors, which he drilled sternly. The tide rushes into the Solway Firth from the German ocean so tremendously that it often seems like a tidal wave, and the boy Paul Jones had

sometimes to run for his life when he was wading out commanding his miniature ships and crews. Close by his father's cottage is the sheltered bay of the Carsethorn, where, in the old days, ships for Dumfries loaded and unloaded. Deep water is so close to the shore that as the ships worked in and out their yardarms seemed to be actually passing among the trees that cling stubbornly to the rocky shore. It was the delight of the boy Paul Jones to perch himself on the highest point of the promontory, and to screech out his orders to the incoming and outgoing vessels; and the ship-masters soon found that this bold boy was as good as a pilot any day, and if they followed his directions they would always have water enough under the keel.

The only school which Paul Jones ever attended was the parish school at Kirkbean, and that only until he was twelve years old. But it was characteristic of him, as man and boy, to learn with the greatest eagerness; and the result is shown in his letters and language, which are far superior to the average in those days. The habit of application never left him, and he was a hard student all his life.

There were many mouths to feed in the little cottage at Arbigland, and in Paul Jones's thirteenth year he was bound apprentice to a ship-master. His first voyage was to Fredericksburg in Virginia, where he had a brother, William Paul,

living, — a respected citizen. His time ashore was spent with this brother, and so well did he conduct himself that when William Paul died some years later he left his estate to this favorite younger brother. There were, however, many years of toil before Paul Jones, and hardships and buffetings, and even injustices that sank deep into his sensitive soul. It is said that he was at one time on a slave-ship, the slave-trade being then legalized throughout the world; but, hating the life, he quitted his ship, and the traffic too. When he was about twenty years old, he found himself without employment in Jamaica. He embarked as a passenger on the John, — a fine brigantine, owned by a shipping firm in his native shire. On the voyage home both the captain and the first mate died of yellow fever. The young passenger — John Paul, as he was then called — took command of the brigantine, and brought her safely to her port. The owners rewarded him by making him captain and supercargo of the John. This shows that Paul Jones was not only a capable seaman, worthy of command at twenty years of age, but of integrity and steady habits as well.

In his twenty-fourth year occurred an event which gave him great anguish, and was probably the reason of his leaving his native land. While in command of a vessel in Tobago, he had his carpenter, Maxwell, flogged for some offence. This

was the common mode of punishment in those days. Maxwell complained to the Vice-Admiralty Court, and the affair was investigated. The Court examined Maxwell, and dismissed his charges against Paul Jones, as frivolous. It is noted, though, that Paul Jones expressed sorrow for having had the man flogged. Maxwell shipped on another vessel, but died a week or two afterward. This put a much more serious aspect on the matter. There was some talk of a prosecution for murder; but it was shown that Maxwell's death had nothing to do with the flogging, and it was dropped. Nevertheless, the effect upon a nature, at once arrogant and sensitive, like Paul Jones's, was exquisitely painful. It is likely that this case was the origin of the one weak point in Paul Jones's tremendous naval genius: he was never a good disciplinarian, and he seems always to have hesitated too long before administering punishments, and of course severer punishments were needed thereby.

Upon his return to Scotland, he was coldly received by his friends and neighbors. To Paul Jones's mind this coolness assumed the form of a persecution. He left his native country with resentment in his heart against it, although he kept up affectionate relations with his family. Many years after, when he was one of the celebrities of his age, he speaks in a letter of his grief at learning of his mother's death, especially as he had

found that several sums of money which he had sent her had never reached her.

He came to Virginia in 1773, and took possession of the property left him by his brother, which with his own savings gave him a competence. Little is known of the particulars of his life from 1773 to 1775; but late researches show that his friendship with Thomas Jefferson, and with other persons of prominence in Virginia and North Carolina, then began. Although his origin was humble, his manners, tastes, and feelings led him naturally into the most distinguished society, and at a very early period in his career he is found associated with persons of note.

On the first outbreak of hostilities with the mother country Paul Jones offered his services to the Continental Congress, and his name headed the list of thirteen first lieutenants in the navy appointed in December, 1775. Perhaps no man had stronger natural and personal inclinations toward the revolutionary cause than Paul Jones. In his native country he was poor, obscure, and perpetually barred out by his low estate from those high places to which his vast ambition aspired. In America, under a republican form of government, he was as good as any man, provided only he were worthy; and the fixed rank of a naval officer would give him standing in Europe among those very persons who would otherwise have regarded him with contempt.

His commission was obtained through Mr. Joseph Hewes, a member of Congress from North Carolina, and the celebrated Robert Morris, who was then at the head of the Marine Committee of Congress. The influence of Thomas Jefferson was also in his favor.

At this time his true career may be said to have begun. He was then twenty-eight years old, of "a dashing and officer-like appearance," his complexion dark and weather-beaten, and his black eyes stern and melancholy in expression. He had a slight hesitation in his speech which disappeared under the influence of excitement. His manner with sailors was said to be peculiarly winning, and he was, no doubt, highly successful in dealing with those characters which can be gained by kindness and indulgence; but with that part of mankind to whom severity is a necessity, he does not seem to have been so well adapted, and the evidences of a firm and consistent discipline are wanting. When he came to command a ship of his own, — which he did very shortly, — he was extremely polite to the midshipmen, frequently asking them to dine with him in the cabin, but likely to blaze away at them if they were not carefully and properly dressed for the occasion. One of his officers, presuming upon Paul Jones's indulgence, ventured to be insolent, and got himself kicked down the hatchway for it. It is said that when a midshipman on the topgal-

lant yard was inattentive to his duty as a lookout, Paul Jones himself would gently let go the halyards, and the unlucky midshipman would come down the yard on the run.

Paul Jones was extremely temperate in his habits, and was naturally fond of order and decorum. He had fixed religious principles, and, like Washington, he considered a chaplain a useful and even a necessary officer. A letter of his is extant in which he says he would like a chaplain on board who should be accommodated in the cabin, and always have a seat at the cabin table, "the government thereof should be entirely under his direction." He was a tireless student by night, his days at sea being occupied, when cruising, by exercising his officers and men in their duty.

His first orders, as an American naval officer, were as flag lieutenant on the Alfred, of twenty-four guns, Commodore Hopkins's flagship. On this ship Paul Jones claims to have hoisted with his own hands the original flag of the Revolution — the pine-tree and rattlesnake flag — the first time it was ever displayed. This may well be true, as such an act is thoroughly in keeping with the romantic sentiment of Paul Jones's character; and he says, "I think I feel the more for its honour" on account of that circumstance.

Congress had assembled in the Delaware River a fleet of five small vessels, and it was with ardent hopes that Paul Jones joined this little

squadron. In a very short while, though, he discovered that Commodore Hopkins was very much disinclined to "go in harm's way," to use one of Paul Jones's favorite expressions, and his wrath and disgust flamed out without any concealment. The object of the cruise was to capture a lot of stores, left unprotected by the British at the island of New Providence. By Commodore Hopkins's blundering the governor of the island had time to save most of the stores. The Commodore finding himself among the keys and islands of the Bahamas, seems to have been afraid to go away and afraid to stay where he was. Paul Jones, however, taking a pilot up to the foretop-mast head with him, piloted the Alfred to a safe anchorage. To crown all, the five vessels ran across a little British frigate, the Glasgow, off Newport, and after a smart cannonade the Glasgow succeeded in slipping through Commodore Hopkins's fingers and getting back to Newport.

Paul Jones's rage at this was furious, and it became impossible for him to serve in the same ship with Commodore Hopkins, who was shortly afterward censured by Congress, and within the year dismissed from the navy. In the summer of 1776 Paul Jones was given the command of a little sloop, the Providence, mounting only twelve four-pounders, but a fairly smart and weatherly vessel. He improved her sailing qualities so that she could log it faster than a great many

better ships. With this little sloop he was employed in conveying military stores from New England to Washington's army on Long Island; and as the coast and the sounds swarmed with the cruisers of Lord Howe's fleet, this was a difficult and daring undertaking. But in difficulty and daring Paul Jones always shone, and he succeeded so as to win the admiration and personal regard of Washington, as well as the approval of Congress. In the autumn he made a more extended cruise, during which he captured several valuable prizes, and showed his courage and seamanship by manœuvring boldly before the Solebay frigate and then running away from her. The Solebay thought she had bagged the Providence, when the little sloop, suddenly weathering her, ran directly under her broadside, where the guns could not be brought to bear, and went off before the wind while the heavy frigate was coming about. On another occasion he was chased by the Milford frigate. Finding the Providence was fast enough to play with the Milford, Paul Jones kept just out of reach of the heavy cannonade of the Milford; and every time the frigate roared out her heavy guns, a marine, whom Paul Jones had stationed aft on the Providence, banged away with his musket in reply. This amused and delighted the men, and when Paul Jones was ready he ran away from the frigate, leaving her still thundering away in his wake. These little events had a

good effect on his officers and men, showing them that they had a man of dash and spirit for their captain. When his cruise was up, he received full recognition of his services by being appointed to command a splendid frigate then building in Holland for the American government. Meanwhile he was ordered to take command of the Ranger, a sloop-of-war, mounting eighteen light guns, then fitting for sea at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. On the very day he was appointed to her, June 14, 1777, Congress adopted the stars and stripes as the national ensign, and Paul Jones always claimed that he was the first man to hoist the new flag over a ship of war when he raised it on the Ranger in Portsmouth harbor.

The Ranger was weakly armed and poorly fitted. Her cabin furnishings were meagre enough, but there were two bookcases full of books provided by the captain. The Ranger sailed from Portsmouth in November, 1777, and after an uneventful voyage, arrived safely at Nantes in France in December. Leaving his ship in charge of the first lieutenant, Simpson, Paul Jones started for Paris to confer with the three American Commissioners, Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee. He bore a letter to them from the Marine Committee describing him as "an active and brave commander in our service." On reaching Paris, a sharp disappointment awaited him concerning the Holland frigate. Great Britain, which

was not then at war with either France or Holland, although on the verge of it, had made complaints about the frigate, and it had been passed over to the French government to prevent its confiscation. Paul Jones had a partial compensation, however, in winning the affectionate regard of Benjamin Franklin, and the friendship that ever afterward subsisted between the impetuous and sentimental Paul Jones and the calm and philosophic Franklin was extremely beautiful.

Despairing of getting any better ship than the Ranger, Paul Jones set himself to work to improve her sailing qualities; it is a striking fact that he improved every ship he commanded, before he was through with her.

Being ready to take the sea, he determined to secure a salute to his flag from the splendid French fleet commanded by M. de La Motte Piquet. He took the Ranger to Quiberon Bay, and at once sent a letter to the French admiral, announcing his arrival, and another to the American agent at L'Orient. Paul Jones's dealings with this agent are laughable, as many of his transactions were. He began, as usual, with the most formal politeness; but as soon as there was any hesitation shown in complying with his requests, which it cannot be denied were perfectly sensible, he would blaze out, and carry his point by the bayonet, as it were. The agent did not understand the importance of

the salute, and although he dined on board the admiral's ship the day the request was made, he failed to mention it to the admiral. This infuriated Paul Jones, who wrote him a letter in which he said, "I can show a commission as respectable as any the French admiral can produce," and finally declared that unless the salute were allowed, he would leave without entering the upper bay at all.

His determined attitude had its effect. The French admiral agreed to salute the Ranger, and to make sure that it was done in broad daylight, so there could be no misunderstanding about it, Paul Jones kept his ship in the lower bay until the next day. The French admiral paid the American commander the compliment of having the guns manned when the Ranger sailed through the double line of the French fleet, and when the French guns roared out in honor of the American flag, it meant that France was from that day openly, as she had been for some time secretly, committed to an alliance with the struggling colonies. Seeing that nothing was to be hoped for in the way of a better ship, Paul Jones, like all truly great men, determined to do the best he could with the means at hand. So, on an April evening in 1777, he picked up his anchor and steered the little Ranger straight for the narrow seas of Great Britain, the Mistress of the Seas, and the greatest naval power on earth. The boldness of this can

scarcely be overestimated. The French admirals, with fifty-five ships of the line, hung on to their anchors, not caring to risk an encounter with the fleets of England, manned by her mighty captains and heroic crews; but Paul Jones, alone, in a weak vessel, lightly armed, took all the chances of destruction, and bearded the lion in his den. He counted on the slowness of communication in those days, and all of those other circumstances in which fortune favors the brave, — and the result justified him.

He cruised about for several days, burning and destroying many merchant ships. He landed at St. Mary's Isle, in order to capture the Earl of Selkirk, but the bird had flown. His men became mutinous, because, contrary to the custom of the time, they were not allowed to loot the place. Paul Jones was forced to allow them to carry off some silver plate, which he afterward redeemed out of his own pocket, and returned to Lady Selkirk. He also landed at Whitehaven, and fired the shipping in the port, although he did not succeed in burning the vessels. But the desire of his heart was to find a ship of war, not too strong for him, with which he might fight it out, yardarm to yardarm. This he found in the Drake, a sloop-of-war, carrying twenty guns, and lying off Carrickfergus. Like the Ranger, she was a weak ship; but she carried brave men and a fighting captain, and when, on the afternoon of the 24th of April,

the Ranger appeared off Carrickfergus, the Drake promptly came out to meet her. The tide was adverse, and the Drake worked out slowly, but her adversary gallantly waited for her in mid-channel, with the American ensign at her mizzen peak, and a jack at the fore. The Drake's hail, "What ship is that?" was answered by the master, under Paul Jones's direction: "This is the American Continental ship Ranger. We wait for you and beg you will come on. The sun is but little more than an hour high, and it is time to begin."

The Drake promptly accepted this cool invitation, and the action began with the greatest spirit. In an hour and four minutes the Drake struck, after a brave defence. She had lost her captain and first lieutenant, and thirty-eight men killed and wounded, and had made, as Paul Jones said, "a good and gallant defence." The Ranger lost two men killed and six wounded. On the 8th of May he arrived off Brest in the Ranger, with the American ensign hoisted above the union jack on the Drake. The French pilots vied with each other as to which should have the honor of piloting the two vessels through the narrow channel known as Le Goulet, and there was no question of a salute then,— every French ship in sight saluted the plucky little American.

This daring expedition gave Paul Jones a great

reputation in France. The French government, by this time openly at war with England, asked that Paul Jones remain in Europe to command a naval force to be furnished by France; and he was justified in expecting a splendid command. But the maladministration of affairs in Paris left him a whole year, idle and fretting and wretched, as such bold spirits are, under hope deferred, and at last he was forced to put up with an old Indiaman, the Duc de Duras, larger, but not stronger than the Ranger. He changed the name of this old ship to the Bon Homme Richard, out of compliment to Dr. Franklin, whose "Poor Richard's Almanac" had just then appeared. She was the flagship of a motley squadron of two frigates besides the Bon Homme Richard; the Alliance, an American frigate commanded by a French captain, Landais, who was suspected to be crazy, and acted like a madman; the Pallas, commanded by another French captain, Cottineau, a brave and skilful seaman; and a cutter and a brig, neither of which was of consequence in the cruise.

A number of American prisoners having been exchanged and sent to France, Paul Jones was enabled before he sailed to get about thirty Americans for the Bon Homme Richard. Every officer on the quarterdeck was a native American except Paul Jones himself and one midshipman; and the first lieutenant was Richard Dale,

one of the most gallant seamen the American navy ever produced. He had lately escaped from Mill Prison in England. Paul Jones justly appreciated his young lieutenant, then only twenty-three years old, and the utmost confidence and attachment subsisted between them.

The crew was made up of men of all nationalities, including a number of Malays, and many of the fok'sle people did not understand the word of command. With this singular squadron and unpromising ship and crew Paul Jones set sail on the 15th of August, under orders to report at the Texel early in October. Great things were expected of him, but agonizing disappointment seemed to be in store for him. Landais, the captain of the Alliance, was mutinous, and the whole squadron seemed incapable of either acting together or acting separately. Twice Paul Jones sailed up the Firth of Forth as far as Leith, the port of Edinburgh, and the Edinburghers made preparations to withstand this bold invader. Among the children who lay awake at night waiting for the booming of Paul Jones's guns, was a lad of ten years of age, — Walter Scott, who, when he was the great Sir Walter, often spoke of it. But both times the wind blew Paul Jones out to sea again, so that nothing was done in the way of a descent on Edinburgh. Many merchant ships were taken, and the coasts of the three kingdoms were

alarmed, but so far no enemy in the shape of a warship had appeared. The time for the cruise to be up was fast approaching, and it seemed likely to end in a manner crushing to the hopes of Paul Jones, when, at noon on the 23d of September, 1779, the Bon Homme Richard being off Flamborough Head, a single ship was seen rounding the headland. It was the first of forty ships comprising the Baltic fleet of merchantmen, which Paul Jones had expected and longed to intercept. A large black frigate and a smaller vessel were convoying them; and as soon as the two warships had placed themselves between the fleet and the Bon Homme Richard, all the fighting ships backed their topsails and prepared for action.

At the instant of seeing the two British ships, Paul Jones showed in his air and words the delight his warrior's soul felt at the approaching conflict. His officers and crew displayed the utmost willingness to engage, while on board the Serapis her company asked nothing but to be laid alongside the saucy American.

The Serapis was a splendid new frigate, — "the finest ship of her class I ever saw," Paul Jones afterward wrote Dr. Franklin, — and carried fifty guns. It is estimated that her force, as compared to the poor old Bon Homme Richard, was as two to one. She was commanded by Captain Pearson, a brave and capable officer.

At one o'clock the drummers beat to quarters on both ships, but it was really seven o'clock before they got near enough to begin the real business of fighting. Much of this time the British and Americans were cheering and jeering at each other. The Serapis people pretended they thought the Bon Homme Richard was a merchant ship, which indeed she had been before she came into Paul Jones's hands, and derisively asked the Americans what she was laden with; to which the Americans promptly shouted back, "Round, grape, and double-headed shot!"

At last, about seven o'clock in the evening, the cannonade began. At the second broadside two of the battery of eighteen-pounders on the "Bon Homme" burst, the rest cracked and could not be fired. These had been the main dependence for fighting the ship. Most of the small guns were dismounted, and in a little while Paul Jones had only three nine-pounders to play against the heavy broadside of the Serapis. In addition to this, the shot from the Serapis had made several enormous holes in the crazy old hull of the Bon Homme Richard, and she was leaking like a sieve, while she was afire in a dozen places at once. The crews of the exploded guns had no guns to fight, but they had to combat both fire and water, either of which seemed at any moment likely to destroy the leaking and burning ship. They worked like heroes, led by the gallant Dale,

and encouraged by their intrepid commander, whose only comment on the desperate state of the ship was, "Never mind, my lads, we shall have a better ship to go home in."

Below, more than a hundred prisoners were ready to spring up, and were only subdued by Dale's determined attitude, who forced them to work at the pumps for their lives. The Serapis pounded her adversary mercilessly, and literally tore the Bon Homme Richard to pieces between decks. Most captains in this awful situation would have hauled down the flag. Not so Paul Jones. Knowing that his only chance lay in grappling with his enemy and having it out at close quarters, he managed to get alongside the Serapis, and with his own hands made fast his bowsprit to the Serapis' mizzen-mast, calling out cheerfully to his men, "Now, my brave lads, we have her!" Stacy, his sailing-master, while helping him, bungled with the hawser, and an oath burst from him. "Don't swear, Mr. Stacy," quietly said Paul Jones, "in another moment we may be in eternity; but let us do our duty."

The Alliance lay off out of gunshot and quite inactive most of the time, but at this point she approached and sailed around the two fighting ships, firing broadsides into her consort, which did dreadful damage. After this, her captain, the crack-brained and treacherous Landais, made off to windward and was seen no more.

The combat deepened, and apparently the Bon Homme Richard was destined to go down fighting. At one moment the two ships got into a position in which neither could fire an effective shot. As they lay, head and stern, fast locked in a deadly embrace, and enveloped in smoke and darkness as they repeatedly caught fire from each other, a terrible stillness fell awhile, until from the bloody decks of the Serapis a voice called out, —

"Have you struck?"

To this Paul Jones gave back the immortal answer, which will ever mark him among the bravest of the brave, —

"We have not yet begun to fight!"

Soon the conflict was renewed. The Serapis' heavy guns poured into and through the Bon Homme Richard's hull, but the topmen on the American ship kept up such a hurricane of destruction on the Serapis' spar deck, that Captain Pearson ordered every man below, while himself bravely remaining. A topman on the Bon Homme Richard, taking a bucket of hand grenades, lay out on the main yard, which was directly over the main hatch of the Serapis, and, coolly fastening his bucket to the sheet block, began to throw his grenades down the hatchway. Almost the first one rolled down the hatch to the gun-deck, where it ignited a row of cartridges left exposed by the carelessness of the powder

boys. In an instant came an explosion which seemed to shake the heavens and the ocean.

This was the turning-point. The men in the Bon Homme Richard's tops climbed into those of the Serapis, the yards of the two ships being interlocked, and swept her decks with fire and shot. Dazed by the explosion, and helpless against the American sharpshooters, the courageous men on the Serapis saw themselves conquered, and Captain Pearson himself lowered the flag which had been nailed to the mast. Lieutenant Dale, swinging himself on board the Serapis' deck, received the captain's surrender; and thus ended one of the greatest single ship fights on record. The slaughter on both ships was fearful, and the Serapis' mainmast went by the board just as she was given up. But the poor Bon Homme Richard was past help, and next morning she was abandoned. At ten o'clock she was seen to be sinking. She gave a lurch forward and went down, the last seen of her being an American flag left flying by Paul Jones's orders at her mizzen peak, as she settled into her ocean grave.

The Pallas, under Captain Cottineau, had captured the Countess of Scarborough, which made a brave defence, and, in company with the Serapis, sailed for the port of the Texel, which they reached in safety. England scarcely felt the loss of one frigate and a sloop from her tremendous fleets, but the wound to the pride of a great and

noble nation was severe. She caused the Dutch government to insist that Paul Jones should immediately leave the Texel. This he refused to do, as it was a neutral port, and he had a right to remain a reasonable time. The Dutch government then threatened to drive him out, and had thirteen double-decked frigates to enforce this threat, while twelve English ships cruised outside waiting for him. But Paul Jones kept his flag flying in the face of these twenty-five hostile ships, and firmly refused to leave until he was ready. Through some complication with the French government, he had the alternative forced upon him of hoisting a French flag on the Serapis, or taking the inferior Alliance under the American flag. Bitter as it was to give up the splendid Serapis, he nobly preferred the weaker ship, under the American flag, and in the Alliance, in the midst of a roaring gale on a black December night, he escaped from the Texel, "with my best American ensign flying," as he wrote Dr. Franklin.

The British government offered ten thousand guineas for him, dead or alive, and forty-two British ships of the line and frigates scoured the seas for him. Yet he escaped from them all, passed within sight of the fleets at Spithead, ran through the English Channel, and reached France in safety. He went to Paris, where he was praised, admired, petted by the court, and

especially honored by royalty. The King, Louis XVI., gave him a magnificent sword, while the Queen, the lovely and unfortunate Marie Antoinette, invited him in her box at the opera, and treated him with charming affability. The first time he went to the theatre in Paris, he found a laurel wreath suspended over his seat. He rose quietly and moved away, — an act of modesty which was much applauded by all.

Captain Pearson, on his return to England, received honors that caused many persons to smile, although he had undoubtedly defended his ship very determinedly. He was made a knight. When Paul Jones heard of this, he remarked: "Well, he has deserved it; and if I have the good fortune to fall in with him again, I will make him a lord."

Compliments were plenty for Paul Jones, too; but no ship was forthcoming for him worthy of his fame, and at last, in 1780, he was forced to return to America in the Ariel, a lightly armed vessel, carrying stores for Washington's army.

His services were fully appreciated in the United States. General Washington wrote him a letter of congratulation; Congress passed a resolution of thanks in his honor, and gave him a gold medal; and the French king made him a Knight of the Order of Military Merit. The poverty of his country prevented him from getting a ship immediately, and the virtual end of the

war in 1781 gave him no further opportunity of naval distinction.

He was employed in serving the naval interests of the country on this side of the ocean until 1787, when he went to Europe on a mission for the government. While there, he had brilliant offers made him to enter the service of the Empress Catherine of Russia, and to take charge of naval operations against the Turks. The nature of Paul Jones was such that any enterprise of adventurous daring was irresistibly attractive to him. At that time his firm friend Thomas Jefferson was minister to France, and he advised Paul Jones to accept the offer. This he did, relying, as he said, on Mr. Jefferson to justify him in so doing, and retaining his American citizenship. He had an adventurous journey to Russia, stopping for a while on public business at Copenhagen, where he was much caressed by the King, Queen, and Court. He resumed his route by sea, and at one time in a small boat in the Baltic Sea he forced the sailors to proceed at the point of his pistol, when their hearts failed them and they wished to turn back.

His connection with the Russian navy proved deeply unfortunate. He had to deal with persons of small sense of honor, who cared little for the principles of generous and civilized warfare. He was maligned and abused, and although he succeeded in clearing himself, he left Russia with

disappointment and disgust. His health had begun to fail, and the last two years of his life, from 1790 to 1792, were spent in Paris, where he was often ill, and more often in great distress of mind over the terrible scenes then occurring in France. He did not forget that the King and Queen had been his friends, and showed them attentions when it was extremely dangerous to do so. Lafayette, who had long been his devoted friend, soothed his last days; and Gouverneur Morris, then minister to France, paid him many kind attentions. He made his will, naming Robert Morris as his executor, and then faced death with the same cool courage as upon the bloody and burning deck of the Bon Homme Richard.

In the evening of the 18th of July, 1792, after calmly making his preparation, the end came. The National Assembly of France paid honor to his remains, and in the United States the news of his death was received with profound sorrow. Some years after, the Congress sent the St. Lawrence frigate to Europe, to bring back the body of Paul Jones to the United States; but it was found that, according to the French custom, it had been destroyed by quicklime long before.

Few men have been more warmly attacked and defended than Paul Jones; but in the light of history and of research it is altogether certain that he was a man of extraordinary genius and courage,

of noble aspirations, and sincerely devoted to his adopted country; and at all times and places he made good his proud declaration: "I have ever looked out for the honor of the American flag."

The eulogy passed upon him by Benjamin Franklin was brief, but it embodied many volumes of praise. It was this: "For Captain Paul Jones ever loved close fighting."

RICHARD DALE

If an example were needed of the superiority of character and courage over intellect, no more fitting person could be named than Commodore Richard Dale,—"that truth-telling and truth-loving officer," as Fenimore Cooper calls him. Nothing is more beautiful than the reverence which Cooper, a man of real genius, had for Richard Dale, whose talents, though good, were not brilliant; and in this Cooper shows to lesser minds that intellect should ever pay tribute to character. Dale had nothing more than good, sound sense, but by the courage and constancy of his nature, by his justice, gentleness, and probity, he attained a standing of which a great intellect might have been proud. He was Paul Jones's first lieutenant during two years of daring adventure, and, like Cooper, Paul Jones, the man of genius, loved and admired Dale, the man of excellence. The affection between the two was deep, and in Dale's old age he spoke of his old commander, then no more, affectionately as "Paul," —a strong testimony in the great captain's favor.

Dale was born near Norfolk, in Virginia, in 1756. His parents were respectable persons, but

Rid. Dale

not very well off, and Dale appears to have had but few advantages of education in his boyhood. He was, by nature, a daring and reckless speller, and the ingenuity and simplicity with which he could twist the letters of the alphabet into forms never before seen, was truly comical. In a letter to Paul Jones, describing some work he was doing on the bowsprit, he says, "the boulsprit was something Dificoult in Giting out." But no doubt the bowsprit was smartly handled, and got out all right. And when "tow french voluntairs" deserted, Dale says he "made haist" to send the "golly-boat" after them, and certainly got them, if it were possible to do so. But in spite of his spelling, he was educated in all the courtesies of life, his manners were polished, his person was handsome, and he was a daring and capable seaman. Paul Jones said he always found Dale ready and willing to execute the most hazardous duty; and this willingness to do his duty was the distinguishing characteristic of his whole life.

When he was twelve years of age, he entered the merchant service and made a voyage with an uncle of his, a sea-captain. Then began his career of hard knocks; and few men who sail blue water ever had more. He began by falling down the hold of his ship, and breaking most of his bones except those of his back and neck; then followed experiences of being knocked overboard and battling in the sea an hour before being

picked up; of being struck by lightning and remaining unconscious for hours. From the time he joined the navy of the colonies, he never was in action without being either wounded or captured and sometimes both. Three times was he badly wounded, five times was he taken prisoner; yet he managed to be in active service during a great part of the war, and at last died peacefully in his bed, at a good old age.

Almost as soon as war was declared, Dale, then a fine young fellow of nineteen, enlisted in the feeble naval forces of the colonies; and the very first time he smelled powder, in 1776, he was captured by the British and taken to Norfolk. There he was put on board a prison ship, where he found among the officers an old friend of his, a young Virginian, Bridges Gutteridge. Gutteridge was a royalist, and, being a plausible fellow, he used his friendship with Dale to persuade him that he was wrong in being in rebellion. Dale, who was young and inexperienced, was beguiled by his friend into turning royalist too, and actually enlisted upon a small British vessel. The first action in which he was engaged — a fight with American pilot boats — Dale met his usual fate, and was severely wounded. He was carried back to Norfolk, and in the long days of illness and convalescence he began to see his conduct in its true light, and bitterly repented of having fought against his country. He went

to work upon his friend Gutteridge, and succeeded in converting him, after once having been converted by him, into a patriot. Dale then quietly bided his time to get back into the American navy, and, as he said, "I made up my mind if I got into the way of bullets it should never again be the bullets of my own country."

It is indicative of the simple honesty of the man, that he never attempted to belittle or disguise this early lapse of his, and always expressed the deepest sorrow for it, alleging what a nature less fine would never have admitted, "I knew no better at the time."

As soon as he was recovered, he managed to get aboard a merchant ship; to go to sea was the first step toward returning to the continental navy, which was the desire of his heart. He was captured as usual. But this time it was just the very sort of a capture that Dale desired, his ship being taken by the Lexington, a smart little cruiser under the command of Captain Barry, a brave officer, with whom Dale's life was afterward much connected. Dale lost not a moment in enlisting as midshipman on the Lexington, and the first time she backed her topsails at a British vessel she was captured, and Dale was a prisoner for the third time.

An officer and a prize crew were thrown on the Lexington, and her captor, the Pearl, frigate, directed the prize to follow her. In the night

the Americans rose on their captors, and retook the brig, carrying her into Baltimore. Soon after that, Dale was exchanged, and in January, 1777, he found himself again on the Lexington, as master's mate. In March, the brig sailed for France, under Captain Henry Johnson, and cruised boldly in European waters.

One night, in September, 1777, Captain Johnson found himself close under the quarter of a well-armed British cutter. The two gallant little vessels opened fire with great spirit, and the Americans were getting decidedly the better of it, when their shot gave out. Dale and the other officers collected every scrap of iron about the ship that could be found or wrenched from its place to fire in the place of shot, but the unequal fight could not last long; the brig was given up after several of her officers and men had been killed, and Dale was a prisoner for the fourth time before he was twenty-one years old.

In most of these revolutionary encounters the ships engaged were of trifling force, but the attack and defence were gallant and spirited in the highest degree, by both the Americans and the British, and no ship was given away on either side.

The Lexington's officers and men were carried to England and thrown into Mill Prison, where they underwent the agonies of famine and privation. Dale always spoke of those dreadful days

with horror, and told of being driven by hunger to kill a stray dog, which he, with the other prisoners, cooked and ate.

The story of their sufferings got abroad and excited the indignation of many persons in England, who were jealous of the honor of their country. They raised sixteen thousand pounds for American prisoners in England, and relieved all their material wants. But the Americans longed for liberty, and Dale and a few others determined to have it. They found a place under the prison walls through which a hole could be dug, and they began the almost impossible task of scooping out enough earth that they might crawl through to the other side. They could work only while exercising in the prison yard, and had to put the dirt in their pockets as they scooped it up. Nevertheless, after working for weeks at it, on a dark night in February, 1778, Captain Johnson, Dale, and several of the Lexington's crew crawled through, and found themselves free at last of the prison walls.

It is strange that men who could accomplish this should have been so unwise as to stay together, but for a week the whole party wandered about the country at night, half starved and half clothed, in the worst of wintry weather. At last they concluded to separate, and Dale and a young midshipman cast their lots together. Their character was soon suspected by people they asked for

food and shelter, and pursuers were put upon them. They doubled on their tracks and got to London. They were still hunted for, and the house in which they were concealed was raided. Dale and his friend escaped into a shed close by, and lay concealed under straw for hours, until the pursuing party had left. They then slipped down to the docks, and were entered as hands on a vessel for Scotland. But Dale's usual ill-fortune followed him. The British navy, wanting able seamen, sent a press gang to the Scotch vessel, and Dale and his friend, unluckily attracting notice by their stalwart appearance, were impressed. In a little while they were found out to be American officers, and were sent back to Mill Prison. Forty days in the black hole of the prison followed. When this was over, Dale earned another forty days in it by singing rebel songs. He continued to sing his songs, though, while in the black hole. After a whole year in prison he made his escape under circumstances which he never revealed to the day of his death, except that he had on a complete suit of British uniform. How he got it remains a mystery, and from that day until his death, forty-seven years afterward, Dale kept the dangerous secret of the person who risked so much for him. It is supposed that he was provided liberally with money, and even with a passport, for he got out of England quickly and went to France. Here, at

L'Orient, he found Paul Jones, then fitting out the Bon Homme Richard, in which both the commander and Dale were to win immortality.

Dale was then an active, handsome young fellow of twenty-three, and had seen more hard service than many officers of the highest rank. At the first glance Paul Jones saw his steadiness, coolness, and splendid qualities as a sea officer, and soon made him first lieutenant on the Bon Homme Richard. A deep attachment sprang up between these two kindred souls, and it is enough for Dale's reputation to know that he was a man after Paul Jones's own heart.

In the summer of 1779 the Bon Homme Richard, old, crazy, and weakly armed, but carrying as much valor as any ship afloat, started upon her daring cruise in the narrow seas of Great Britain. Every day showed Paul Jones more and more the admirable character of his young first lieutenant, and in all the hazardous enterprises of that bold cruise Dale was the man who was always Paul Jones's right arm of strength. On the 23d of September, 1779, was fought the celebrated battle between the Bon Homme Richard and the Serapis. Dale was not only the first, but the only sea lieutenant on board, and proved himself altogether worthy to serve under the great captain who took the Serapis. He commanded the main deck, and, although his wretched and defective guns soon

became disabled, his activity did not cease for a moment.

At the most critical stages of the battle, when the leaking, burning, and helpless Bon Homme Richard seemed in extremity, the master-at-arms let loose more than a hundred prisoners, who came crowding up into the magazine passage. Dale, running below, with his pistol cocked, faced the mob, and, under Paul Jones's orders, set them to work at the pumps. He then returned to the deck, and so carried away was he with the ardor of battle that when, with his invariable fortune, a shot struck him in the leg, he was quite unconscious of it. As soon as Captain Pearson hauled down his flag, Dale claimed his right to go aboard the Serapis and receive her surrender. The mainyard of the Serapis hung cock-a-bill over the Bon Homme Richard's poop. A line hung from the torn rigging, and Dale, seizing it, swung himself over, and landed alone on the Serapis' deck. The Serapis' officers and people did not all know the colors had been struck, and there was some fighting on the deck afterward. The Serapis' first lieutenant ran up just as Captain Pearson surrendered, and cried out, "Has she struck?" meaning the Bon Homme Richard. Captain Pearson remained silent, and Dale replied, "No, sir, the Serapis has struck."

The lieutenant, ignoring Dale, repeated his question to the captain, who shook his head.

The lieutenant after a moment asked that he might go below and stop the firing that had not altogether ceased; but Dale, who was not taking any chances of losing the ship, politely refused, and at once passed the captain and his first lieutenant aboard the Bon Homme Richard.

As soon as the Americans had possession of the Serapis, Dale sat down on the binnacle, overcome with exhaustion, after nearly ten hours of manœuvring and fighting, two hours of the time the ships having been lashed together. He gave an order, and, rising to see it executed, measured his length on the deck. Then for the first time he knew that he was wounded. He managed to keep the deck, however, and his wound proved to be trifling.

In all the accounts of the compliments showered upon Paul Jones and his officers at the Texel and afterward at Paris, Dale seems to have kept modestly in the background. His worth, however, was not overlooked, and his testimony that Captain Landais of the Alliance had acted treacherously toward the Bon Homme Richard during the fight with the Serapis was of weight in securing Landais' dishonorable discharge from the continental navy.

While Paul Jones was enjoying the charms and splendors of Paris, Dale, who had little taste for such things, was "keeping ship" so

well that the captain's absence was not felt. Like Paul Jones, he ardently longed to put to sea in a fine ship; but both were doomed to disappointment when the Ariel was the best to be had. In her he sailed, with Paul Jones, for America, in 1781. Off the French coast they met with a storm so terrific that Dale always declared he considered they were in more danger than at any time during the fight with the Serapis. In speaking of Paul Jones's coolness in such desperate straits, when every moment they seemed about to go to the bottom, Dale said: "Never saw I such coolness in such dreadful circumstances as I saw in Paul Jones then." To the amazement of all, they escaped with their lives, although the Ariel was so crippled that they had to return to port, and it was many weeks before they could sail again.

On reaching America, Paul Jones desired Dale to accompany him to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where the government directed him to superintend the building of a fine frigate then on the stocks. But Dale preferred active service, and joined the Trumbull frigate, going through with his usual experience, a hot fight with a British ship and a severe wound. This time he varied the performance by being captured for the fifth time. He was soon exchanged, however, and the war ended shortly after.

The navy of the United States ceased practi-

cally to exist at the close of the Revolution, and Dale went into the China trade. He made a modest fortune, came ashore, and married a beautiful girl, the ward of his old commander Captain Barry. In 1794 the navy was reorganized, and Dale was the first captain who got afloat under the United States flag. He made several cruises, and in 1801 was made commodore of a fine squadron sent to the Mediterranean. His flagship was the President, and it was a sad coincidence that upon this very ship, in the war of 1812, his son, a gallant young midshipman, received his death wound.

The fine appearance of the American ships and the smartness of their officers and crews were generally admired, and Dale himself made friends and admirers by his manly and modest bearing. He spelled no better than ever, but his seamanship was beyond reproach. Once, on coming out of Port Mahon, the President struck upon a rock, and was in imminent danger of pounding herself to death. Commodore Dale was below when she struck. He instantly came on deck, assumed command, and by his coolness, nerve, and judgment, saved the ship. He had her temporarily repaired, under his own directions, at Port Mahon, but went to Toulon to have her put in dry dock. When the water was pumped out, and her hull exposed, the French naval officers were lost in admiration at the ingenious way in

which, with crude appliances and materials, Dale had contrived to repair the damage.

The great Nelson, while observing the manœuvring of this fine squadron under Commodore Dale, remarked: "Those American ships can, if they wish, make trouble for the British navy."

Dale returned home, expecting to spend the rest of his active life in the navy. But in those days it seems to have been a common practice to treat the most distinguished and deserving officers without the least consideration of their rights or feelings. This happened to Commodore Dale. An affront being offered him by the head of the navy, he promptly resigned. He had two gallant sons who remained in the navy, however; and one of these, his namesake, lost his life while gallantly fighting in the war of 1812. Dale retired to Philadelphia, and spent the rest of his days in honorable retirement. His old friend Captain Barry had come into possession of the splendid gold sword given Paul Jones by the King of France, and which Paul Jones's relatives had given to Robert Morris, and from him Captain Barry got it. On Captain Barry's death he left this sword, most worthily and appropriately, to Dale, the great captain's first lieutenant.

Dale never lost his interest in sailors and all who live by the sea. He was a deeply religious man, and organized a mariners' church, which he urged all sailors to attend. Every Sunday after-

noon for thirty years he went to this humble little chapel, and, besides joining in the service, would go about among the sailors who were present, gently inquiring into their wants, and never failing to do a kindness for them when possible. It is said that no man was ever heard to speak a word against him. He died peacefully, after a short illness, in 1826. The United States named for him a fine sloop of war, which, like Dale himself, saw much service and had many vicissitudes. She is still in existence, and when, a few years ago, her timbers were examined, they were found as sound and whole, in spite of all her years of service, as they ought to be in a ship named for a man like Richard Dale. In her main gangway a memorial plate is placed, recalling Commodore Dale's services in the fight between the Bon Homme Richard and the Serapis, and quoting the never-to-be-forgotten words of Paul Jones, when he was asked, in his almost helpless ship, if he had struck, — "I have not yet begun to fight."

THOMAS TRUXTUN

In the old days the American sailors were great singers, and naval songs, rude in construction but vivid with patriotic fire, were immensely popular. When they were trolled forth on the fok'sle, nearly every sailor could join in, and the effect was as inspiring as Dibdin's songs were to the British navy about the same time. Among the first and favorite of these songs was "Truxtun's Victory," beginning, —

"Come, all ye Yankee sailors, with swords and pikes advance;
'T is time to try your courage and humble haughty France."

There was a good deal of poetic license regarding facts as well as forms, and the poet, in describing Truxtun's victory on L'Insurgente, a crack French frigate, represents

"The blood did from their scuppers run;
Their captain cried, 'I am undone!'"

Instead of crying that he was undone, the French captain made a gallant defence; and if his metal

A Representation of the Medal presented by the United States to THOMAS TRUXTUN ESQUIRE, and a copy of the Resolution of Congress. The lower circle is the Obverse side of the Medal.

Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives, of the United States of America, in Congress assembled. That the President of the United States, be requested to present to Captain Thomas Truxtun, a Golden Medal, emblematical of the late action between the United States Frigate Constellation of thirty eight Guns, and the French Ship of war La Vengeance of fifty four Guns. In testimony of the high sense entertained by Congress of his Gallantry and good conduct in the above engagement, wherein an example was exhibited by the Captain Officers, Sailors and Marines, honourable to the American name and instructive to its rising Navy.

And it is further Resolved, that the conduct of James Jarvis a Midshipman in said Frigate, who Gloriously preferd certain death to an abandonment of his post, is deserving of the highest praise, and that the loss of so promising an Officer is a subject of national regret.

Theodore Sedgwick,
Speaker of the house of Representatives.
Thomas Jefferson
Vice President of the United States and President of the Senate.
Approved March 29th 1800. *John Adams*

MEDAL AWARDED TO THOMAS TRUXTUN

had been heavier, it might have been "Barreault's Victory," instead of "Truxtun's Victory."

Thomas Truxtun was born in New York in 1755, but, losing his father early, was taken to Jamaica by a relative and brought up. He had but little chance of a school education, and went to sea early. He was but twenty years old when the Revolution broke out, and was then in command of a merchant vessel. Unfortunately it cannot be recounted that Truxtun entered the American navy then. Instead he chose serving in a privateer. But it must be remembered that the whole naval force of the colonies was very feeble, and so slight was the expectation that it could prevail against the mighty fleets of England that only a few small ships were officered, and there was no more room for would-be officers. Truxtun, however, did excellent service in privateers, — usually not very honorable ships in themselves, as they prey only on the commerce of an enemy; yet in the Revolution many privateers boldly engaged with armed ships. Naturally the naval men held privateers in contempt, and a letter of the great Paul Jones is extant which shows that he and young Captain Truxtun had a sharp quarrel over the rights of privateers. Congress had passed an act forbidding a privateer to hoist a pennant in the presence of a naval ship, without first getting the consent of the naval ship's commander. Truxtun, an impetuous young man

of twenty-five, in command of the ship Independence from Philadelphia, arrived at L'Orient in France in 1780. At the same time the Ariel, under command of Paul Jones, was lying in the port. What followed Paul Jones himself describes in a letter addressed to "Mr. Thomas Truxtun, master of the ship Independence."

"You passed, some time ago, with the merchant ship called the Independence belonging to Philadelphia, close under the stern of the continental ship Ariel, under my command in the Road of Groix; and you then showed no mark of respect to the Continental flag of commission, but went on with a long Pendant flying, and without lowering any sail or colour, or crew showing any mark of politeness. In the port of L'Orient you were not satisfied with a long Pendant, but you hoisted a kind of Broad one; and until yesterday you have worn it at your moorings in presence of the Continental ship Ariel. This was flying in the Face of a positive resolution of Congress. When your vessel was yesterday under sail, she was steered in my presence very near the Ariel in passing down to Port Louis. I then sent a Boat with an officer to request yourself or your representative to take down the Pendant. The officer returned and reported to me that my boat's crew had been menaced by your people, and that your mate said he had Orders to treat me with Contempt, and disobey any order or request to haul down the Pendant. When I found this, I sent Lieut. Dale back with two Boats armed, and with

another polite message, and such orders as I will answer for having given. The Pendant was then hauled Down as he approached. I cannot answer your letter of this date more particularly, as there are in it several words that I do not understand and cannot find in the dictionary. I shall receive no more letters from you on the subject. It is not me you have offended. You have offended the United States of America. I am, sir, your most humble servant,

"J. Paul Jones."

By this letter it will be seen that Captain Truxtun, like Richard Dale, was better at fighting than writing; and it will also be noted that when Paul Jones's blood was up, he sent Dale to call Captain Truxtun to account, and as soon as Dale took the matter in hand, "the Pendant was then hauled down."

Truxtun had an adventurous time of it during the Revolution, and made a name for himself as a man of enterprise and a fine seaman. His after achievements make it a source of keen regret that such a man should have been engaged in such a calling as privateering, when, like Paul Jones and Richard Dale, he might have assisted his country much better on a regular ship of war.

He remained in the merchant service after the war was over; but when the United States began to create a navy in 1784, Truxtun was given a

captain's commission. Trouble had been brewing with France for some time, and in 1797 the government determined to build several frigates in case of war, and this year saw the launching of the two noble ships, the Constitution and the Constellation, which were both destined to win immortal fame. Truxtun was appointed to command the Constellation, and also to superintend the building. She was laid down at Baltimore in the summer of 1797, and few ships ever took the water more quickly than the glorious Constellation. She had a very remarkable launch on the 7th of September, 1797. Nearly all her guns and stores were on board, and seven days after she kissed the water she was ready to sail. She had been coppered in ten hours. The Constellation was a beautiful frigate, very fast and weatherly, and carrying thirty-eight guns. She was finely officered and manned, and Captain Truxtun sailed on his first cruise with every advantage in his favor, — a ship that could both fight and run, and a company worthy of the ship. He cruised for some time without meeting with any extraordinary adventures; but the next year four other smaller vessels were put under his command, and the squadron went to the West Indies. This was directly in harm's way, as the West India islands were full of French ships of war, and France and the United States were on the eve of a quasi-war, so that Captain Truxtun sailed with the hope of

getting a whack at a Frenchman, and this came about in February, 1799. As the old song has it,

"'T was in the month of February, off Montserrat we lay,
When there we spied the Insurgente — "

This was considered to be the fastest frigate in the world, and was commanded by a crack French captain, Barreault. She carried forty twelve-pounders in her batteries, and the Constellation carried thirty-eight twenty-four pounders, making the Constellation much the stronger ship; yet Captain Truxtun showed, in the fight which followed, that he could have whipped a heavier ship than L'Insurgente, which made a very smart fight too. Captain Barreault knew that the Constellation was the heavier, but he did not on that account refuse the battle, but showed a manly willingness to fight.

The Constellation sighted L'Insurgente in the forenoon of February 9, 1799, and immediately made for her. As soon as she got near enough, the French ship hoisted American colors, in order to draw her on and give the French ship time to find out something about the stranger. Captain Truxtun then showed the private signal, which Captain Barreault was unable to answer. L'Insurgente then threw off every disguise, and, setting the French ensign, ran off and fired a gun to windward, which meant, in sailor language, that he was ready for a yardarm to yardarm

fight. Captain Truxtun set an American ensign at every masthead and came on, the Frenchman waiting on an easy bowline, for his enemy. The Americans, both officers and men, showed the most cheerful ardor to engage, and the two ships went at it with equal spirit. When within hailing distance the Frenchman hailed; but disregarding this, Captain Truxtun came on until he was abeam of his adversary. Then he let fly his broadside, and the Frenchman answered him promptly. Captain Truxtun discovered that he had no fool to play with in Captain Barreault, and for an hour the Frenchman gave the Constellation all she could do. But by that time the superior metal of the Constellation began to tell. The Frenchman aimed at the spars and rigging, and the foretopmast of the Constellation was badly wounded. The officer in the foretop was Midshipman David Porter, afterward the celebrated captain, and, seeing that the foretopmast was likely to fall, with all the men in the hamper, he hailed the deck to report the damage. So furious was the cannonade, though, that his voice could not be heard. He therefore gave orders on his own account to cut away the stoppers and lower the topsail yard, and by his promptness the spar as well as the men in the top were saved. The Americans aimed at the hull, and in an hour L'Insurgente was riddled like a sieve. The Constellation then shot ahead, and,

luffing across the Frenchman's bows, was ready with every gun to rake him, when Captain Barreault, seeing his hopeless condition, struck his colors.

The captured frigate was sent into St. Kitts with only two midshipmen, Porter and Rodgers, and eleven men, to keep one hundred and seventy three Frenchmen below the hatches. This they did, besides managing the ship in a hard gale, and took her in triumph to St. Kitts within four days.

The next year Captain Truxtun had a chance to show what he could do against a stronger ship than his own, and on the 1st of February, 1800, being off Guadeloupe, he sighted La Vengeance, one of the great French frigates, mounting fifty-two guns. The Constellation immediately set her ensign and gave chase, but La Vengeance, having on board a large number of officers of rank and soldiers which she was carrying to France, would rather not have fought, and so took to her heels. The chase continued from the morning of the 1st of February until late in the afternoon of the 2d, and it was eight o'clock at night before they finally came to close quarters. When La Vengeance found the Constellation was bent on a fight, she entered into it with all the bravery of the French character. The officers and soldiers she was carrying as passengers went to quarters with the regular crew, and she came

on in grand style, giving her first broadside as soon as the Constellation was within range. Captain Truxtun, without firing a gun, drew within pistol shot of his enemy, both crews cheering as the two gallant enemies neared each other. When within pistol shot, the Constellation barked out every gun in broadside, and the fight began in good earnest. Both ships were running free, and during the whole fight, which lasted five hours, the cannonade continued. The crowded condition of the Frenchman's decks made the slaughter dreadful, but she did not take her punishment without giving it back with spirit. The moon had risen in tropic splendor, and a good breeze was blowing, so that both ships could manœuvre, and the bright light enabled them to see what they were doing. Toward midnight, though, it was plain that the French ship was getting the worst of it. However, she showed no signs of surrender, and her guns that could still be worked pounded the mainmast of the Constellation until it was soon seen that it must fall. At this point occurred what is probably the noblest act of young courage in all naval history. The officer of the maintop was a little midshipman, James Jarvis, who was only thirteen years old. When it was seen that nothing could save the mainmast, the topmen leaped and clambered down, and an old sailor begged the little midshipman to save himself. To this young

Jarvis answered calmly, "As an officer I cannot leave my station, and if the mast goes, I must go with it." In a few moments the great mast fell with a fearful crash, and this dauntless boy came down with it. He was the only officer on the Constellation killed.

This accident rendered the Constellation helpless for a time, and La Vengeance, having still spars enough left to get away, made off, without firing another gun, and was soon lost in the darkness that followed the setting of the moon. Her loss of men was frightful, while that of the Constellation was comparatively small.

When Captain Truxtun reached home after this brilliant engagement, he was received with acclamations, Congress gave him a gold medal and its thanks, and passed a solemn resolution in honor of young Jarvis, "who gloriously preferred certain death to the abandonment of his post." This is, perhaps, an unprecedented honor for a boy of thirteen, but it cannot be denied that the little midshipman, who deliberately gave his life rather than desert his post, well earned it.

The London merchants of Lloyd's coffee-house sent Captain Truxtun a splendid service of plate worth six hundred guineas, and some years afterward the United States named a smart sloop of war after him, the Truxtun. Captain Truxtun served but a short while in the navy after this. In 1802 he was ordered, as Commodore, to com-

mand a squadron, and, finding he was to have no captain on his flag-ship, declined the honor. His letter was misunderstood by the authorities of the Navy Department to mean a resignation from the navy, and was, as such, accepted. Commodore Truxtun, too proud to withdraw it, chose rather to withdraw from the navy, — a course which must ever be regretted. He chose Philadelphia as his home, and became a prominent and important citizen. He was for some time Sheriff of the city. In 1823 his death occurred, and he left behind him an honorable name as a man, and a brilliant reputation as a seaman.

William Bainbridge

WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE

Commodore Bainbridge was born at Princeton, New Jersey, in 1774. His family were of good standing, and willing as well as able to give the boy a liberal education; but an inborn love of adventure possessed him, and he begged to be allowed to go to sea. At that time, 1789–90, the navy of the Revolution had ceased to exist, while the navy of a later date was not created, and the only way to gratify the boy was to send him to sea in a merchant vessel. He first shipped in his sixteenth year, and his good habits and natural genius for the sea gave him the place of first officer of a ship when he was eighteen. During a voyage to Holland a mutiny occurred on board his vessel, which was quelled chiefly by the vigor and determination of young Bainbridge. The owners rewarded his services by giving him the command of the ship when he was barely nineteen. At this time he was a singularly handsome young man. He was six feet high, his figure elegant, and his countenance as frank and open as it was comely. His manners were cordial, and his disposition impetuous; but although he sometimes fell into hasty and passionate language, no

man was more ready to make amends. Like Paul Jones, he stammered slightly, but, also like him, he spoke smoothly enough when there was occasion for it, and no one ever heard him halt in his speech when an order aboard ship was to be given.

Bainbridge remained in command of merchant ships until the reorganization of the navy in 1798. During those years a singular and unsatisfactory state of affairs existed for American ships on the ocean. Without a single ship of war to protect them, they were liable to be overhauled by British warships, which claimed the right to search, by French warships, which practically fought and captured them, while a large trade with the North of Europe and the East was harassed by the corsairs of the Barbary coast. With regard to these last, a truly disgraceful condition prevailed. The Dey of Algiers actually demanded and received tribute from the United States government for not molesting its trading-vessels! It is true that other nations of Europe submitted to the same sort of blackmail; but their reasons, although not sufficient, were better than those of the Americans. New in the art of forming a great republic, and unduly fearful of the dangers of a fixed naval force as well as of a standing army, the government of the United States tried to do without a navy; but it paid for its mistake many times over, both in national honor and in money. The

European nations also paid money to the Barbary pirates, and allowed their ships to be used in various ways, at the request of these haughty despots; but it was with a desire to secure their political alliances in the universal wars that scourged Europe at that day, and not from inability to protect their own carrying ships.

It may be imagined how galling this was to American captains, and that they resisted whenever there was a chance of success. Young Bainbridge was the last man to submit to coercion when he could help himself, and on two occasions, while in command of merchant vessels, showed the spirit that was in him. Once, when commanding the Hope, a little vessel carrying only eleven men before the mast and four nine-pounders, he fell in with a British privateer, carrying thirty men and eight guns. A sharp action ensued; for privateers are not wont to heed any vessel's rights when the privateer is the stronger party, and Paul Jones's characterization of them as "licensed robbers" is not far wrong. The Hope, however, made a good defence, and forced the privateer to call for quarter. Under the existing law, Bainbridge could not claim her as lawful prize, but was forced to let her go, shouting out to her commander as they parted, "Tell your employers if they have occasion for the Hope, they must send some other man than you to get her!"

Another time, the Indefatigable, frigate, under Sir Edward Pellew, afterward Lord Exmouth and the conqueror of Algiers, sent a squad of seamen on board the Hope, and took out of her a man alleged to be a British subject. Bainbridge could not resist, but he sent word to Sir Edward that the first British vessel of a force the Hope could cope with, a man should be taken out of her, as sure as he was alive and commanded the Hope. This he did within a week, and carried the man back to the United States with him.

Things reached such a pass in 1798 that the necessity for a navy became pressing, and steps were promptly taken to organize and equip a naval force. Bainbridge, then twenty-four years old, was among the first to apply for a commission, and he was given that of lieutenant commandant. He soon got the command of a little cruiser of fourteen guns, captured from the French, and renamed the Retaliation. The ship was ordered to the West Indies, to cruise in company with the Montezuma, sloop of war, and the Norfolk, brig. On a November day in 1798, while cruising off Gaudeloupe, Bainbridge found himself too near two French frigates, Le Volontier, forty-four guns, and L'Insurgente, forty guns.[1] L'Insurgente was a tremendously fast frigate, and soon overhauled Bainbridge and com-

[1] See the biography of Commodore Truxtun, who captured L'Insurgente.

pelled him to strike his colors. He was at once taken on board Le Volontier, while L'Insurgente proceeded in chase of the Montezuma and the Norfolk. Captain St. Laurent, of Le Volontier, seeing L'Insurgente about to engage two adversaries, and knowing her captain, Barreault, to be a man brave to rashness, was disturbed at the prospect. He asked Bainbridge, who was on the quarterdeck, what the force of the American ships was. Bainbridge promptly replied that the Montezuma carried twenty-eight long guns, and the Norfolk twenty. This was about double their real force. Captain St. Laurent at once signalled L'Insurgente to return. Her captain, Barreault, was deeply chagrined, and when he went on board Le Volontier, told Captain St. Laurent that the American vessels were of trifling force, and he could easily have taken them both. Then Bainbridge's clever *ruse* was discovered; but the French officers, realizing that he had done his duty in trying to save his country's ships, showed no ill-will toward him.

The Retaliation was the first and only ship of war captured by the French during the years that war existed between the United States and France, although it never was declared. But Bainbridge's reputation did not suffer by this, as his whole conduct was that of a man of spirit and capacity. He rose to the rank of captain just as he reached his twenty-sixth birthday; and

in 1800 he was appointed to the command of the George Washington, of twenty-eight guns. His first duty was to carry tribute to the Dey of Algiers. No more hateful service could have been devised for him, and great blame rests upon the men in the government who subjected the United States to such humiliation.

In September, 1800, Bainbridge reached Algiers, and anchored within the mole. Scarcely had he landed the tribute, consisting of about half a million in money, — enough to have built a ship that could have knocked the Dey's forts about his ears, — when he was asked to carry the Dey's ambassador to Constantinople, along with a present to the Sultan, of slaves, wild beasts, and a large sum of money. Bainbridge was furious at the demand; but the Dey insolently told him that he must go, or the ship, which was completely in the Dey's power, would be taken, her officers and crew sold into slavery, and war made on American trade. Bainbridge was reminded that British, French, and Spanish ships had performed the same duty; but no doubt Bainbridge realized that in all those cases it was done from political motives, while in his case it was done simply because he could not help himself. With a very bad grace, he agreed, and the presents and passengers were put in the ship and he sailed for Constantinople in October. It was a cruise the officers of the George Washington

never liked to speak of; but there is no doubt that, although it was a time of the utmost vexation and mortification, innumerable amusing incidents occurred. The Mohammedans had great difficulty in keeping their faces toward Mecca during the frequent evolutions of the ship, and a man had to be stationed at the compass to let them know when it was time for them to "go about." This was a standing cause of laughter and gibes from the sailors, which naturally gave great offence to the Mohammedans; and these disagreements, together with a ship full of wild beasts, made it a cruise never to be forgotten.

Bainbridge was very doubtful whether his vessel would be allowed to pass the Dardanelles, as the American flag had never been seen in those seas before; so he concluded to get through by his wits. He approached with a strong wind, and clewed up his light sails as if about to anchor, saluting meanwhile. The salute was returned, and under cover of the smoke sail was quickly made and the ship slipped past, out of range of shot from the castles. When she reached Constantinople, a boat was sent ashore to report her arrival. The Turkish officials sent back word that they knew no such nation as the United States. They were soon convinced that there was such a nation, and were well received. The Sultan's brother-in-law, Capudan Pasha, became much attached to Bainbridge, and mentioned that

the Dey of Algiers was not in favour with the Sublime Porte. Bainbridge, knowing he would return to Algiers, got a letter from Capudan Pasha, in which the Dey was commanded to treat the American commander with the highest respect. Bainbridge returned to Algiers in January, and was immediately met with another demand, — that he take the Algerine ambassador back to Constantinople. This he firmly refused, at an interview in which the Dey stormed, raged, and threatened. In the midst of this, Bainbridge calmly produced Capudan Pasha's letter. The Dey paused, grew pale, and trembled, and then burst into profuse offers of assistance, which Bainbridge coolly declined, and left the palace.

The next day, in obedience to orders from Constantinople, the Dey declared war against France, and notified all of the French in Algiers — fifty-six men, women, and children — that unless they left within forty-eight hours, they would be sold into slavery. France was then at war with the United States, but this did not prevent Bainbridge from offering these unfortunates an asylum on the George Washington at great inconvenience to himself, and carrying them all to Spain. For this humane act he received the personal thanks of Napoleon Bonaparte, then First Consul.

Bainbridge returned to the United States with the George Washington, and soon after got the Essex, a thirty-two-gun frigate attached to the

squadron which was sent to the Mediterranean in 1801, under the command of Commodore Richard Dale. Among the lieutenants of the Essex was Stephen Decatur, afterward the celebrated Commodore.

The ship arrived at Barcelona in August, and took a berth in the harbor, close to the Spanish guardship. The neatness of the Essex and the seamanlike appearance and conduct of her officers and men were so much remarked upon that it gave great offence to the officers of the guardship. The stay of the American frigate at Barcelona was a long scene of turmoil, owing to collisions between her junior officers and the Spanish midshipmen. In one of these Decatur figured prominently. Bainbridge acted with spirit and also with judgment, but was glad to get away from such uncomfortable quarters.

By that time Congress was beginning to wake up to the necessity for a more vigorous policy with regard to the Barbary powers, and the squadron was directed to protect American shipping by force. The corsairs interpreted this to mean war, and their aggressions reached such a pitch, after the return of Dale's squadron in 1802, that in 1803 Commodore Preble was sent out with the Constitution, the Philadelphia, and five smaller vessels, to reduce these piratical powers. Bainbridge was promoted from the command of the Essex to the Philadelphia, a fine thirty-eight-gun

frigate, carrying a few more than three hundred men.

Her first lieutenant was David Porter, who, as a young midshipman, had distinguished himself in the Constellation under Captain Truxtun, and who was destined to a highly honorable and active career during the whole time of his service in the navy.

The Philadelphia arrived at Gibraltar in August, 1803, and the next day began to cruise up and down the straits in search of corsairs. In a day or two she fell in with a Moorish vessel, the Meshboha, in company with an American brig which had been captured, and her company taken aboard the Meshboha. The Philadelphia stood by, and forced the Moorish captain, Lubarez, to send all his prisoners to the Philadelphia, and to come aboard himself. Bainbridge invited him into the cabin, and feeling sure that he had orders to capture American ships, directed him to produce these orders. Lubarez stoutly denied he had any such orders.

"Very well," coolly responded Bainbridge, taking out his watch. "I am now going on deck for half an hour. When I return, if you cannot show your orders, I will immediately hang you at the yardarm for a pirate."

At the end of half an hour Bainbridge returned. Lubarez then sullenly admitted he had orders, but they were inside his waistcoat.

"Take off your waistcoat," said Bainbridge.

Lubarez began slowly to remove his waistcoat; but another appeared under it. He finally peeled off five waistcoats, and underneath the last one were the orders. Bainbridge immediately took possession of the Meshboha and her prize, and carried them both into Gibraltar.

In a few days Commodore Preble reached Gibraltar, and Bainbridge was sent to Tripoli, with orders to intercept and capture every Tripolitan vessel possible. He arrived before Tripoli, in the autumn of 1803, and immediately began a vigorous blockade. On the 31st of October he gave chase to a xebec trying to get into the harbor. He was rapidly overhauling her, when, at the mouth of the harbor, the water suddenly shoaled, and the Philadelphia ran upon a tremendous reef, known to the Tripolitans, but not down on any chart.

At once every effort was made to get the ship off, but she held fast, and soon heeled over so far to starboard that her guns on that side became useless. The Tripolitans at once saw her desperate plight, and gunboats came out in swarms to attack her. The Americans fought the gunboats off as best they could, meanwhile working with amazing energy to save the ship. All the water in her was pumped out, the anchors were cut from the bows, most of her guns thrown overboard, and at last the foremast was cut away.

Still the ship stuck fast. Bainbridge, who had shown great coolness and determination in the dreadful circumstances in which he found himself, presently saw that he must give up the ship. He called a council of his officers, and they agreed that all had been done that men could do. The carpenters were ordered to scuttle the ship; and just as the autumn night was closing in, the Philadelphia's colors were hauled down, and the Tripolitans swarmed over the decks, in the ports, and everywhere a foot could be set. Then looting began; the officers being robbed of everything, even their swords and epaulets. Bainbridge gave up his watch and money in dignified silence; but when his wife's picture was about to be torn from around his neck, he swore no man should have it, and fought the Tripolitan off who would have taken it.

The officers and men were then carried into the town, where the officers were received by the Bashaw in great state, surrounded by his ministers. It is said that Bainbridge never looked handsomer or more imposing than when he appeared at the head of his officers before the barbaric prince. The Bashaw treated them with Eastern courtesy, gave them a handsome supper, for they were half dead with hunger and fatigue, and then sent them to a temporary prison. They were in charge of Sidi Mohammed D'Ghies, one of the great officers of state, who proved to be a

man of good heart, and whose ideas of military honor were Western rather than Eastern.

Then began a captivity which lasted for nineteen months. The men were reduced to a position of slavery, and made to work for their Tripolitan masters. The officers were closely confined, and after several attempts at escape had been made by the younger ones, they were removed to the dungeons of the Bashaw's castle.

The situation of Bainbridge was sad in the extreme. He felt himself to be foredoomed to misfortune. He had lost his first ship, the Retaliation, in the French war. His cruise in the George Washington had been painful and humiliating in many respects; and now he had lost one of the two frigates that the country depended upon to punish the corsairs. A very affecting letter of his to his wife exists, in which he seems plunged into despair; and in it he says he sometimes thinks "it would have been a merciful dispensation of Providence if my head had been shot off while our vessel lay rolling upon the rocks." But from this sharp affliction his gallant spirit rallied after a time. His officers and men felt undiminished confidence in and affection for him, and did all in their power to comfort him.

The very day after their capture they sent him a letter saying, "We, late officers of the United States frigate Philadelphia, wishing to express

our full approbation of your conduct concerning the unfortunate event of yesterday, do conceive that the charts and soundings justified as near an approach to the shore as we made, and that after she struck every expedient was used to get her off and to defend her which courage and abilities could dictate.

"We wish to add that in this instance as in every other, since we have had the honor of being under your command, the officers and seamen have always appreciated your distinguished conduct. Believe us, sir, that our misfortunes and sorrows are entirely absorbed in our sympathy for you. We are, sir, with sentiments of the highest and most sincere respect, your friends and fellow sufferers."

Here follow the signatures of every officer under Bainbridge.

He soon received letters from Commodore Preble; and the brotherly kindness expressed in them reflects the greatest honor upon a superior officer who could feel so generously in an affair which crippled and embarrassed him so cruelly as the loss of the Philadelphia. Preble wrote: "May God bless and preserve you! Recollect that destiny, not want of courage, has deprived you of liberty, *but not of honor*." And he adds, "The first consul of France, the celebrated Bonaparte, has interested himself deeply in your situation."

To the chagrin of the Americans, they found that the Philadelphia had not been thoroughly scuttled, and she was hauled off the rocks by the Tripolitans, the holes in her bottom stopped, her foremast refitted, her guns and anchors fished up, and she was towed within the harbor. From the one window of their underground prison, the unfortunate officers of the Philadelphia could see the ship riding at anchor, and disgraced by the pirate flag of Tripoli.

The captives were allowed to communicate at intervals with Commodore Preble, who gave them assurance that they were not forgotten, and that the Bashaw would have to surrender them and pay dearly for having imprisoned them. Besides these official communications, means were found by which letters written in lemon juice were exchanged, and in one of these Bainbridge suggested the possibility of destroying the Philadelphia at her moorings, — which was afterward carried out with splendid dash by Decatur.

In spite of those alleviations, there were long months of weariness and dreariness in a peculiarly trying captivity. The time was not wholly wasted. The midshipmen, whose untamed spirits frequently got them into difficulties, were set to work by the older officers, and all, men as well as officers, bore their imprisonment with fortitude. The seamen were made to labor on the fortifications; and as they were often unruly, the slave-

drivers had no hesitation in ordering them to be bastinadoed on every occasion. The man who administered the punishment was not so hard-hearted as his masters, and although he regularly laid on the required number of blows upon the soles of the sailors' feet, he winked at the fact that they had wrapped folds of matting around their feet, and the blows hurt not at all. The sailors were clever enough to shriek and scream during this mock bastinadoing, and the slave-drivers were completely deceived by Jack's ruse.

At last, on the night of the 15th of February, 1804, the captives were awakened by the firing of heavy guns. By the light of a brilliant moon and the blazing hull and spars of the Philadelphia out in the harbor, they saw the destruction of the ship by Decatur[1] and his gallant band. While they watched her burn to the water's edge, her shotted guns burst with heat and flame, her magazine blew up, and when the sun rose next morning, not a vestige remained of the lovely frigate. She had been destroyed by the Americans under Decatur, without the loss of a single man.

This gave heart to the prisoners, and they felt their deliverance was at hand; but it was not until the spring had passed and the summer dragged along into August that one day they were roused by a heavy cannonade. They were then confined underground in the Bashaw's

[1] See the biography of Decatur.

castle, and there was only one window by which they could see the offing. They eagerly clambered up, and the thrill of joy they felt may be imagined when they saw a smart flotilla of small vessels, led with the greatest dash and impetuosity by Decatur and Somers, burning, sinking, or driving back the Tripolitan gunboats. And farther out in the offing, they saw the glorious Constitution coming into action in grand style, choosing her range with majestic deliberation, and then her batteries roaring out destruction to her enemies, while the Tripolitan shot fell short, or dropped harmlessly against her stout sides.

For six weeks the attack was kept up furiously, and in that time five tremendous assaults were made by Commodore Preble's squadron. In one of these destructive cannonades a round shot from the Constitution tore in at the one window from which a part of the harbor could be seen, and, narrowly missing Bainbridge, knocked him down and almost covered him with the mass of stone and mortar it dislodged. But Bainbridge was not the man to mind a trifle like this, and every time the Constitution came within range, she was welcome to the tired eyes, and the thunder of her well-served batteries was music to the ears of the imprisoned Americans. They hoped from day to day for release, and although the season for active operations closed before the Bashaw had actually been reduced to submission,

yet it was plain that the town could not withstand another such cannonade.

When the Constitution was forced to depart, she left behind her a menacing promise to the Bashaw that she would come back the next season, and finish the work; and the last of May, 1805, saw her again off the town. This time the Bashaw was anxious to make peace. Sidi Mohammed D'Ghies urged him to send Bainbridge aboard the Constitution on his parole, to see what the Americans demanded. The Bashaw asked if Sidi really thought that Bainbridge would return if once his foot touched the Constitution's deck.

"Certainly," replied Sidi; "the American captain will keep his word, and I will leave my eldest son as a hostage that he will return."

The Bashaw, only half believing, allowed Bainbridge to go, and on the 1st of June, 1805, nineteen months exactly after his capture, Bainbridge again trod the deck of an American man-of-war. Commodore Rodgers, commanding the Constitution, and all the officers of the squadron received him affectionately. They had brought out a treaty of peace for the Bashaw to sign, and the first stipulation was that every American prisoner should be given up immediately and without conditions. This, Bainbridge said, he did not believe the Bashaw would ever agree to, as it was a fixed principle with the Barbary

powers never to give up a prisoner without ransom. Bainbridge returned to the shore at nightfall, and, with Sidi, went to the castle, where the Bashaw expressed great surprise at seeing him again. The Bashaw, however, was far less inclined to keep up the fight than Bainbridge imagined. After a day or two of hesitation, a council of war was held at which Bainbridge was invited to be present, — an honor never before bestowed upon a prisoner of the Barbary States. When Bainbridge entered the council chamber at the castle, he found the Bashaw surrounded by all of his great officers of state, with the treaty brought by Commodore Rodgers spread out before them. To sign it meant peace, and the immediate release of every American prisoner; to refuse it meant that the Constitution and her consorts lying out within gunshot of the town, would be thundering at their forts and ships within an hour. The question of peace or war was debated with grave eloquence. The council was evenly divided. At last the decision had to be made. The Bashaw, after a solemn pause, took his signet ring from his bosom, and, affixing it to the treaty, said with dignity, —

"It is peace."

Bainbridge is said to have thought, after the event happened, that the Bashaw had no real intention of withstanding another bombardment, and his hesitation and final yielding to the

advocates of peace was a preconcerted arrangement.

As soon as the treaty was signed, the forts and castle saluted the American flag, and the squadron returned the salute. Next day the American prisoners were released. A Neapolitan who had been held in slavery for years by the Tripolitans had been very kind to the sailors and marines, and they asked Bainbridge if he would authorize the purser to advance them seven hundred dollars out of their pay to buy the Neapolitan's freedom. This was done, and the man was restored to his country by these grateful men.

The squadron sailed for Syracuse, where a court of inquiry into the loss of the Philadelphia was held, and Bainbridge was honorably acquitted. On his return to the United States he was received with much kindness by his companions in arms, by the government, and the people, all of whom regarded him as a brave and capable officer who had lost his ship by one of those fateful accidents against which neither courage nor capacity can prevail.

It seems singular that on the heels of the splendid successes of the navy before Tripoli and with the rest of the Barbary powers, the government and the people showed very little understanding of the value of the naval service. As soon as hostilities were over with the corsairs, a reduction of the navy took place, although at that very

time aggressions of Great Britain upon American merchant ships were continuing at a rate which was bound to provoke war in the end. Bainbridge, like many others, found himself without a ship, and on half-pay; and he asked and obtained leave, during the intervals when he was without a naval command, to make voyages in the merchant service. He was absent on one of these voyages for profit in the autumn of 1811, when at St. Petersburg he heard of the probability of a declaration of war with Great Britain. He started instantly on his return to the United States, and reached Washington in February, 1812. He found there one of Commodore Preble's captains, Charles Stewart,[1] and to his rage and mortification was told that the government thought it vain and foolhardy to give battle on the sea to the mightiest naval power on earth, which had then vanquished the navies of Europe and kept them skulking in their own harbors. Such over-prudence ill suited the ardent and determined natures of Bainbridge and Stewart. They heard that the government had concluded to lay up such ships as it had, and to prosecute the fight entirely on land. They went together to President Madison, and besought him to change this cowardly and unwise policy, and succeeded in persuading him to do it. For this one act the country is forever indebted to Bainbridge and

[1] See the biography of Stewart.

Stewart. While nothing could eventually stop the progress of the United States toward being a great and powerful nation, yet, had it not been for the victories gained at sea during the War of 1812–15, the dignity and prestige of the United States would have suffered an eclipse for fifty years. The success of the Americans in the ship duels on the ocean during the war of 1812 did more to make the United States respected abroad than any event of our history after the Revolution. The great question of the right of search in neutral vessels was settled by the achievements of a few smart vessels with great and daring captains, belonging to a young and hitherto feeble power in America, — a right which had been vainly contested by all the powers of Europe. The British navy had been for more than a hundred years practically invincible, and there can be no doubt that many of its earlier losses in 1812–15 came from absolute rashness, fostered by a long and glorious career of conquest. What was of more value to the United States than the respect of continental Europe was the respect earned from the English themselves. The United States of 1812 was chiefly populated by those only a few generations from an English ancestry, and the people of the two countries were alike in their willingness to make a square, stand-up fight, and then to shake hands afterward. From the hour that the first British frigate struck to an Ameri-

can ship, the British navy highly esteemed the American navy, and the British government realized that at last there was a sea power equal in skill, daring, and resource to Great Britain. The ships lost by the British were scarcely missed from their huge fleets; but Great Britain, like America, promptly recognized the new and tremendous force which the taking of those few ships implied. It was one of the most fortunate hours that ever dawned for the United States when the advice of Bainbridge and Stewart was taken, and within six months they were amply justified.

Bainbridge by his rank was entitled to a choice of the few frigates the country then owned, and he would undoubtedly have chosen the glorious "Old Ironsides" upon which to hoist his flag. But Hull[1] had got her already, and, apprehending that orders might come detaching him, he put to sea in a hurry, and before he returned, had captured the Guerrière frigate. Bainbridge got the Constellation, the fine frigate in which Commodore Truxtun had fought two French frigates. He was not able, however, to get to sea in her; and when Hull returned from his victorious cruise, in August, 1812, he gave up the Constitution to Bainbridge, who hoisted a broad pennant on her. The Essex, thirty-two guns, commanded by Captain Porter, who afterward made his celebrated

[1] See the biography of Commodore Hull.

cruise in her to the Pacific, and the Hornet, of eighteen guns, under the gallant Lawrence,[1] with the Constitution, were ordered to join Bainbridge. Porter was Bainbridge's old lieutenant in the Philadelphia, and had shared his captivity at Tripoli. Events, however, so fell out that the Essex did not join the other two ships, and Bainbridge sailed in October, 1812, for the South Atlantic accompanied only by the Hornet. The Constitution was in need of repairs, and not sailing in her usual great form, but could still sail fairly well on a wind. She had some of the officers and all of the crew in her that had got her out of the clutches of Admiral Broke's squadron in June, and had taken the Guerrière in August. Therefore it was with great confidence that Commodore Bainbridge on the morning of the 29th of December, 1812, made for a British frigate which showed an equal inclination to close with him. This vessel, the Java, which carried forty-nine guns, was undoubtedly a lighter ship than the Constitution. Yet the British were in the habit of engaging such odds successfully with the warships of other nations, and Captain Lambert of the Java showed a stern determination to stand by his colors, and was as far from declining the fight when he saw his adversary's power as when she was still hull down in the distance.

The Java was fitted out to carry Lieutenant-

[1] See the biographies of Porter and Lawrence.

General Hislop and a large staff to Bombay, besides a number of naval officers and seamen for ships on the East India stations. She had about four hundred and twenty-five men on board.

About two o'clock in the day, after manœuvring for an hour or two in order to get together, the first broadsides were exchanged. There was a light wind blowing, and Bainbridge, wishing to get the advantage of it as far as possible, did not strip his ship of much of her canvas, but went into action with most of his light sails set and his royal yards across. The Java, which was finely officered and extra manned, was very actively handled; and so many evolutions were made, in order to get a good position for raking, that the battle ended many miles to leeward of where it began. The cannonade was brisk from the start, and soon after the first broadside Commodore Bainbridge was struck on the hip by a musket ball, and in less than five minutes, while he was standing near the wheel, a shot shivered it, and a small bolt was driven into his thigh. Bainbridge did not leave the deck a moment for this, but remained walking about as if he had not been wounded. The loss of the Constitution's wheel was very serious, especially with so expert an antagonist as Captain Lambert to deal with, and Bainbridge endeavored to close. This was only partially successful, but nevertheless so effective was the Constitution's fire that it was soon appar-

ent that she had the Java at her mercy. The gallant frigate, however, did not strike her colors until every spar was shot out of her, her captain mortally hurt, her first lieutenant painfully wounded, and she had lost forty-eight killed and one hundred and two wounded. Then only she hauled down the union jack which had been flying at the stump of the mizzen-mast. The Constitution had lost nine men killed and twenty-five wounded, and came out of the action with all her royal yards across, and every spar in place.

The Java had been so much cut up that it was impossible to refit her, and Bainbridge was forced to burn her, after taking out her wheel to replace the Constitution's. This was a remarkably clumsy wheel, and in no way matched the handsome fittings of the ship; but it was retained, from motives of sentiment, ever afterward.

Captain Lambert lived several days after the fight, and was put ashore, with the rest of the officers of the Java, at San Salvador. Commodore Bainbridge's wounds were dangerous, as he had remained on deck from the time he was shot, at half past two in the day, until eleven o'clock that night. When Captain Lambert was about to be taken ashore, Bainbridge had himself carried on deck by two of his officers, to where Captain Lambert lay in his cot. Bainbridge, who was then dangerously ill and in great pain, returned the dying officer his sword, and Captain

Lambert, still conscious, feebly thanked him. The interview brought tears to the eyes of all who witnessed it, and the two captains parted, never to meet again in this world, with feelings of kindness such as brave enemies should entertain for each other.

Bainbridge treated all of his prisoners with great generosity, and they showed a very grateful appreciation of it. On the 4th of January, on being informed by Lieutenant Chads, next in command, of Captain Lambert's death, Bainbridge wrote a very beautiful letter, in which he said: "Commodore Bainbridge takes this occasion to observe, in justice to Lieutenant Chads, who fought the Java after Captain Lambert was wounded, that he had done everything which a brave and skilful officer could do, and further resistance would have been a wanton effusion of human blood."

This was valuable testimony to Lieutenant Chads on his future court martial. Bainbridge had known what it was to lose his ship, and he could feel for an officer under a similar misfortune. So thoughtful was his kindness to his prisoners, that General Hislop in gratitude gave him a splendid gold-hilted sword, and the two remained friends and correspondents during the rest of their lives. The conduct of Bainbridge and his officers was duly reported in England, and the Prince Regent, afterward George the Fourth, who could say

graceful things, remarked that he would like to shake hands with Bainbridge, for his magnanimity to the British prisoners. The loss of the Java, following upon that of the Guerrière and the Macedonian, produced a shock of pain and grief throughout Great Britain. The venerable Admiral Jarvis, the day after the news reached London, said he had passed a sleepless night, not from the destruction of a single British frigate, but because of the seamanlike manner in which it had been captured, which gave him as an Englishman much uneasiness and apprehension of the future naval greatness of the United States. Bainbridge returned to the United States within five months of leaving home, and was welcomed as victorious captains always are. He landed at Boston, where he was given a splendid public dinner; resolutions of thanks from the city and State governments were passed in his honor, and he and the brave fellows under him became the heroes of the hour. Amid all this popular adoration, Bainbridge did not forget the claims of the seamen, and immediately began efforts to get them prize money. He wrote, with much justice, that the captain usually got all the honor when a ship was captured, while the officers and men, who did quite as much toward success, got nothing, except from the generosity of the government; and he was deeply gratified when Congress, after awarding him the customary gold medal, and the officers

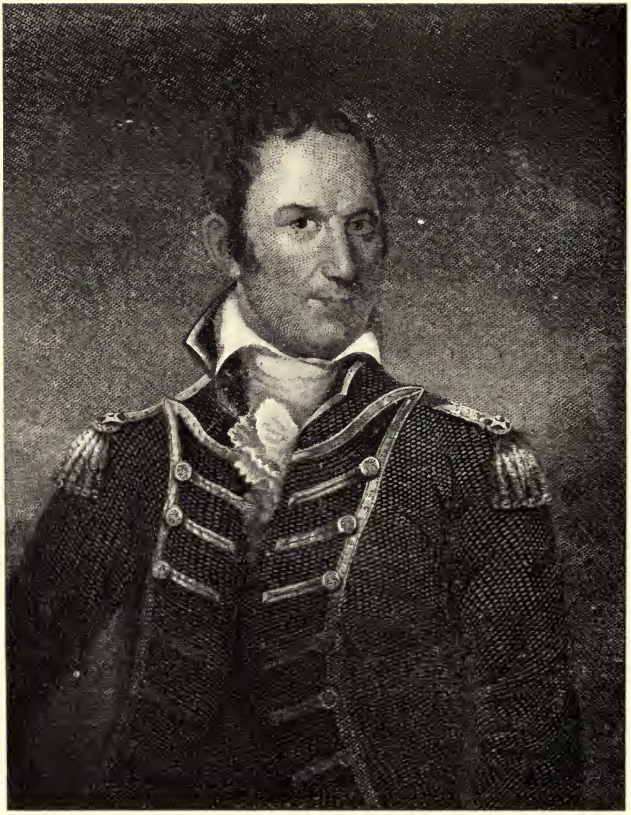
silver medals, gave the crew a substantial sum in prize money. He gave up the Constitution to Captain Stewart, who, like Hull and himself, was destined to do great things in her.

Bainbridge did not get to sea again during the war, but soon after the peace he went to the Mediterranean in command of a splendid squadron destined to punish the Dey of Algiers for certain treacherous acts toward American vessels. Bainbridge hoisted his flag on the Independence, seventy-four guns, — the first line-of-battle ship over which the American flag ever floated. Decatur, who had sailed in advance of the commander-in-chief, had already brought the Dey to terms before Bainbridge arrived, but it was thought well to show the squadron for some time in European waters. It consisted of the largest naval force that had, up to that time, ever been collected under an American flag officer. It consisted of one ship of the line, three splendid frigates, and fourteen smaller vessels, all well officered and manned, and fine ships of their class. At Gibraltar, where it lay some time, it was extremely admired, and the American officers received much attention from the officers of the British fleet and garrison.

In 1820 Bainbridge again took a noble fleet to the Mediterranean. On reaching Gibraltar, he found a very bad state of affairs between the officers of the American squadron, which rendez-

voused there, and the British officers of the garrison and fleet. Misunderstandings, quarrels, and duels were so frequent that the Governor had taken upon himself to forbid the American officers from visiting the town or garrison. He expressed to Commodore Bainbridge, however, a desire for an amicable arrangement. Bainbridge at once required that this prohibition be removed, and refused to treat until it was withdrawn, which was done. As the British officers had very great personal regard for Bainbridge, he was the man for smoothing down differences while maintaining the dignity of an American officer. From that day, American officers have been well treated at Gibraltar. This was Bainbridge's last cruise, and afterward his service was in command of different navy yards. It is said that in the course of his naval career he moved his family twenty-six times. His health began to fail after his fifty-fifth year, but he survived his sixtieth year. He died at Philadelphia in July, 1833, honored and admired to an extraordinary degree. His last words were, as he raised himself from his bed of death, —

"Give me my sword! And call all hands to board the enemy!"



Edward Preble.

EDWARD PREBLE

The story of Commodore Preble is, in itself, not only exciting but amusing; and the gravest histories of him have not been able to keep the vagaries of the commodore's celebrated bad temper in abeyance. Preble was, unquestionably, one of the very greatest sea officers this country ever produced; and however ridiculous the outbursts of his fiery temper might make him, they never made him contemptible. "The old man has the best heart, if he has the worst temper, in the world," was always said of him by the junior officers who were the victims of his wrath. Preble seems to have come naturally by his impetuosity. His father before him, General Preble, brigadier in the provincial army, was one of the same sort, and it was commonly said by their neighbors and friends that "Ned has a good deal of the brigadier in him." The father and son were deeply attached to each other, although they often came in conflict. The last time was when Edward was about sixteen years old, in 1777. Men were so scarce, owing to most of them having enlisted in the continental army, that the old brigadier set his boys to hoeing potatoes on his

farm near Portland, Maine. Edward had not worked very long when, throwing away his hoe, he declared he had no taste for such work, and walked himself off to the seacoast, where he entered the first vessel that would take him. The brigadier did not seem to regard this as wholly unjustifiable, and, seeing the boy was bent on the sea, got him a midshipman's commission in the infant navy of the colonies. In almost his first engagement Edward was taken prisoner, but was given his parole at New York. There is in existence a letter written to him at that time by his father the brigadier, which shows great affection for the boy, and the strongest possible desire that he should conduct himself honorably. The old man, then over seventy, reminds his son "not to stain his honor by attempting to escape." And another recommendation is followed by the utterance of a great truth which it would be well if every human being acted upon. It is this: "Be kind and obliging to all; *for no man ever does a designed injury to another without doing a greater to himself.*"

Before this, an event had occurred which Preble occasionally alluded to in after life, and which, marvellous as it seems, must be accepted as true, for Preble was too close an observer to have been deceived, and too sensible a man to have assumed that he saw a thing which he did not really see.

In the summer of 1779 young Preble was

attached to the Protector, a smart little continental cruiser, under the command of Captain Williams, a brave and enterprising commander. The Protector was lying in one of the bays on the Maine coast, near the mouth of the Penobscot, when on a clear, still day a large serpent was seen lying motionless on the water close to the vessel. Captain Williams examined it through his spy-glass, as did every officer on the vessel. Young Preble was ordered to attack it in a twelve-oared boat, armed with a swivel. The boat was lowered, the men armed with cutlasses and boarding-pikes, and quickly pulled toward the serpent. The creature raised its head about ten feet above the surface, and then began to make off to sea. The boat followed as rapidly as the men could force it through the water, and the swivel was fired at the serpent. This had no apparent effect, except to make the creature get out of the way the faster. Preble, however, had had a complete view of it for some time, and said, in his opinion, it was from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet long, and was about as big around as a barrel. This account must be accepted as exactly true in every particular, coming from a man like Edward Preble; and when he says he saw a sea-serpent from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet long and as big around as a barrel and got close enough to fire at it, it must be absolutely true in every particular. It must be remembered that

Preble died long before sea-serpent stories became common.[1]

Preble saw much service in the Revolution, and was the hero of a very daring achievement not long after his onslaught on the sea-serpent. He was then serving as first lieutenant on the Winthrop, a small cruiser. Captain Little, of the Winthrop, heard there was an armed brig lying at anchor under the guns of the British breastworks on the Penobscot. He gave permission to Preble to cut the brig out, if possible. It was determined to steal in upon her at night, and carry her by boarding. On a dark night, therefore, Preble, with forty men, ran in unperceived, and the Winthrop got alongside her enemy. They all wore their white shirts over their jackets, so that they could tell friends from foes when once on the British vessel. The officer of the deck of the British ship mistook the little Winthrop for a tender of their own, and called out, "Run aboard!" "I am coming aboard," answered Captain Little, as his vessel shot alongside. Preble, with only fourteen men, leaped on the brig's deck, when the Winthrop caught a puff of wind and drifted off. As they passed ahead, Captain Little called out,—

"Shall I send you some more men?"

"No," coolly answered Preble; "I have too many already."

[1] See Cooper's Naval Biography for this incident.

He had then secured the few men on deck, and soon had possession of the brig. The British batteries on shore opened fire on him, but Preble managed to take the vessel out without serious damage and without losing a man.

At the end of the Revolution the navy practically ceased to exist, and Preble went into the merchant service, as so many of the officers were forced to do. But in 1798, when the quasi war with France took place, he re-entered the navy, which had been created anew. He was commissioned lieutenant in 1798, and was lucky enough the very next year to get the Essex, frigate of thirty-two guns. In her he started on what was then the longest cruise ever made by an American man-of-war. He went to the Indian Seas, to give convoy to a valuable fleet of merchant vessels engaged in the China and India trade, and which were liable to be attacked by French cruisers. He had no opportunity to distinguish himself especially in this duty, although he took care of the ships and got them all safely to New York. Soon afterward, the United States and France having come to terms, Preble went ashore and remained for two years. His health was bad in the beginning, but being much improved, in 1803 he reported for duty, and was assigned to the Constitution, forty-four guns, then preparing for a Mediterranean cruise.

At that time the relations of the United States

with the piratical powers of the Barbary coast were most unsatisfactory. After years of submission to their exactions, — a submission which seems almost incredible now, — the United States government determined to do in the end what it should have done in the beginning. This was to send a powerful squadron to attack these pirates of the land as well as the sea, and to force them to respect the persons and liberties of Americans. Preble was given the command of this squadron, with orders to punish Algiers, Morocco, Tunis, and especially Tripoli, so that it would not soon be forgotten. He hoisted the broad pennant of a commodore on the Constitution, and had under him the Philadelphia, a heavy frigate of thirty-eight guns, and five small vessels, — the Enterprise, Argus, Nautilus, Vixen, and Siren. It was a remarkable squadron in many ways. The Constitution was probably the heaviest frigate afloat, and able to withstand a cannonade as well as any line-of-battle ship. In Preble she had a commander worthy of her.

Preble was then about forty years of age, and his temper had not been sweetened by dyspepsia, of which he had been a victim for a long time. The Constitution was destined, under his command, to win for herself the famous name of "Old Ironsides" from the way in which her stout timbers resisted the tremendous cannonade of the forts and fleets at Tripoli. It was in this splendid

cruise, too, that she gained her well-maintained reputation for being a lucky ship. In all her great battles she never lost her commanding officer, nor did any great slaughter ever take place on her decks, nor was she ever dismasted or seriously injured by war or weather, nor did she ever take the ground. Up to this time the Constellation had been the favorite frigate of the navy, but, beginning with Preble's great cruise, the Constitution became, once and for all, the darling ship, not only of the navy but of the nation.

The only other heavy frigate in the squadron was the Philadelphia, thirty-eight guns, commanded by Captain William Bainbridge. Her tragic fate and the glorious manner in which it was avenged is one of the immortal incidents of the American navy.[1]

The five small vessels were commanded by five young men, lieutenants commandant, according to the rank of the day, of which three — Hull, Decatur, and Stewart — reached the greatest distinction. Somers, the fourth, had a short but glorious career. The fifth, Captain Smith, was a brave and capable officer, but his name has been overshadowed by the four young captains, who made a truly extraordinary constellation of genius. Among the midshipmen in the squadron were two, Thomas MacDonough and James Lawrence, who achieved reputations equal to the three great captains.

[1] See the biography of Bainbridge.

In the summer of 1803 the squadron sailed, as each ship was ready, for Gibraltar, which was the rendezvous. On the way out, the young officers on the Constitution had a taste of the commodore's temper, which was far from pleasing to them; but they also found out that he had an excellent heart, and even a strict sense of justice, as soon as his explosions of wrath were over. And before very long they discovered the qualities of promptness, courage, and capacity which made Commodore Preble a really great commander. While off Gibraltar, on a dark night, the Constitution found herself quite close to a large ship. Preble immediately sent the men to quarters, for fear the stranger might be an enemy, and hailing began. The stranger seemed more anxious to ask questions than to answer them. This angered the fiery commodore, and he directed his first lieutenant to say if the ship did not give her name he would give her a shot. The stranger called back: "If you give me a shot, I'll give you a broadside." Preble, at this, seized the trumpet himself, and, springing into the mizzen rigging, bawled out: "This is the United States ship Constitution, forty-four guns, Commodore Edward Preble. I am about to hail you for the last time. If you do not answer, I will give you a broadside. What ship is that? Blow your matches, boys!" The answer then came: "This is his Britan-

nic Majesty's ship Donegal, razee, of eighty guns."

"I don't believe you," answered Preble, "and I shall stick by you till morning to make sure of your character." In a few minutes a boat came alongside, with an officer, who explained that the stranger was the Maidstone, frigate, of thirty-eight guns, and the delay in answering the hails and the false name given were because the Constitution had got close so unexpectedly that they wanted time to get the people to quarters in case she should prove an enemy. This one incident is said to have worked a complete revolution in the feelings of the officers and men toward Preble; and although he was as stern and strict as ever, they could not but admire his firmness and cool courage in an emergency.

Arrived at Gibraltar, Preble met for the first time his five young captains. Not one was twenty-five years of age, and none was married. At the first council of war held aboard the Constitution there was a universal shyness on their part when asked their views by the commodore. The fame of the "old man's" temper and severity had preceded him, and his boy captains felt no disposition whatever to either advise him or to disagree with him. When the council was over, Preble remained in the cabin, leaning his head on his hand, and quite overcome with dejection and depression. To Colonel Lear, an American con-

sul, then on board, Preble bitterly remarked: "I have been indiscreet in accepting this command. Had I known how I was to be supported, I certainly should have declined it. Government has sent me here a parcel of schoolboys, to command all my light craft!"

A year afterward, when the "parcel of schoolboys" had covered themselves with glory, Colonel Lear asked the commodore if he remembered this speech.

"Perfectly," answered the commodore. "But they turned out to be good schoolboys."

After collecting his squadron at Gibraltar, Preble, with three vessels, stood for Tangier. The Emperor of Morocco pretended to be very friendly with the Americans, and sent them presents of bullocks, sheep, and vegetables; but Preble, while treating him with respect, yet kept his ships cleared for action and the men at quarters day and night, lest the Moors should show treachery. On going ashore with some of his officers to pay a visit of ceremony to the Emperor, he gave a characteristic order to the commanding officer of the ship: "If I do not return, enter into no treaty or negotiation for me, but open fire at once." On reaching the palace he was told that the party must leave their sidearms outside before entering the Emperor's presence. Preble replied firmly that it was not the custom of the American navy, and that they

should enter as they were, — which they did. The Emperor soon found what sort of a man he had to deal with, and Preble had no further trouble with him. A few weeks after the arrival of the squadron, Preble heard the news of the loss of the Philadelphia. Nothing better shows the steadfast and generous nature of the man than the manner in which he accepted this misfortune. No regrets were heard from him; no railing accusations against Bainbridge; but a prompt and determined grappling with the terrible complication of having a great part of his force turned against him; and the most tender consideration for the feelings as well as the rights of Bainbridge and his men.

Preble was enabled to provide himself with bomb-vessels and gunboats by the aid of the King of Naples, who, like all the other European sovereigns, wished to see the nest of pirates exterminated. The first one of the "schoolboys" to distinguish himself was Decatur,[1] who, in February, 1804, crept by night into the harbor of Tripoli, and earned immortality by destroying the Philadelphia as she swung to her anchors, in the face of one hundred and nineteen great guns and nineteen vessels which surrounded her. The destruction of the Philadelphia not only wiped away the stain of losing her, in the first instance, but was of the greatest advantage to Commodore

[1] See the biography of Decatur.

Preble in the bombardment of Tripoli, as the frigate would have been a formidable addition to the defence of the town.

In the summer of 1804, his preparations being made, Commodore Preble sailed for Tripoli, where he arrived on the 25th of July. He had one frigate, — the Constitution, — three brigs, three schooners, two bomb-vessels, and six gunboats. With these he had to reduce an enemy fighting one hundred and nineteen great guns behind a circle of forts, with a fleet of a gun-brig, two schooners, two large galleys, and nineteen gunboats, all of which could be manœuvred both inside the rocky harbor and in the offing.

On the morning of the 3d of August the four hundred officers and men of the Philadelphia, confined in the dungeons of the Bashaw's castle, were gladdened by the sight of the American flag in the offing, and soon the music of the American guns showed them that their comrades were battling for them. On that day began a series of desperate assaults on the forts and war ships of Tripoli that for splendor and effect have never been excelled. Preble could fire only thirty heavy guns at once, while the Tripolitans could train one hundred and nineteen on the Americans. During all these bombardments, while the gunboats, in two divisions, were engaging the Tripolitan gunboats, running aboard of them, with hand-to-hand fighting, sinking and burning

them, the mighty Constitution would come into position with the same steadiness as if she were working into a friendly roadstead, and, thundering out her whole broadside at once, would deal destruction on the forts and vessels. In vain the Tripolitans would concentrate their fire on her. Throwing her topsail back, she would move slowly when they expected her to move fast, and would carry sail when they expected her to stand still, and her fire never slackened for an instant. It was after this first day's bombardment that the sailors nicknamed her "Old Ironsides." She and her company seemed to be invulnerable. Escapes from calamity were many, but accidents were few. One of the closest shaves was when, in the midst of the hottest part of the action, a round shot entered a stern port directly in line of Preble, and within a few feet of him. It struck full on a quarterdeck gun, which it smashed to splinters, that flew about among a crowd of officers and men, wounding only one, and that slightly. Had it gone a little farther, it would have cut Preble in two.

After one of the fiercest of the boat attacks a collision occurred between Preble and the scarcely less fiery Decatur, which is one of the most remarkable that ever occurred in a man-of-war. At the close of the attack Decatur came on board the flagship to report. Preble had been watching him, and fully expected that all of the Tripolitan

gunboats would be captured. But, after taking three of them, Decatur found it impossible to do more. As he stepped on the Constitution's deck, still wearing the round jacket in which he fought, his face grimed with powder, and stained with blood from a slight wound, he said quietly to Preble: "Well, Commodore, I have brought you out three of the boats." Preble, suddenly catching him by the collar with both hands, shook him violently, and shrieked at him: "Aye, sir, why did you not bring me more?" The officers were paralyzed with astonishment at the scene, and Decatur, who was scarcely less fiery than Preble, laid his hand upon his dirk. Suddenly the commodore turned abruptly on his heel and went below. Decatur immediately ordered his boat, and declared he would leave the ship at the instant; but the officers crowded around him and begged him to wait until the commodore had cooled down. Just then the orderly appeared, with a request that he should wait on the commodore in the cabin. Decatur at first declared he would not go, but at last was reluctantly persuaded not to disobey his superior by refusing to answer a request, which was really an order. At last he went, sullen and rebellious. He stayed below a long time, and the officers began to be afraid that the two had quarrelled worse than ever. After a while one of them, whose rank entitled him to seek the commodore, went below

and tapped softly at the cabin door. He received no answer, when he quietly opened the door a little. There sat the young captain and the commodore close together, and both in tears. From that day there never were two men who respected each other more than Preble and Decatur.

For more than a month these terrific assaults kept up. The Bashaw, who had demanded a ransom of a thousand dollars each for the Philadelphia's men, and tribute besides, fell in his demands; but Preble sent him word that every American in Tripolitan prisons must and should be released without the payment of a dollar. The Tripolitans had little rest, and never knew the day that the invincible frigate might not be pounding their forts and ships, while the enterprising flotilla of gunboats would play havoc with their own smaller vessels. The Tripolitans had been considered as unequalled hand-to-hand fighters; but the work of the Americans on the night of the destruction of the Philadelphia, and the irresistible dash with which they grappled with and boarded the Tripolitan gunboats, disconcerted, while it did not dismay, their fierce antagonists.

Sometimes the squadron was blown off, and sometimes it had to claw off the land, but it always returned. The loss of the Americans was small; that of the Tripolitans great. One of the American gunboats exploded, and a terrible

misfortune happened in the loss of the ketch Intrepid [1] and her gallant crew. Reinforcements were promised from the United States, which did not come in time, and Preble met with all the dangers and delays that follow the making of war four thousand miles from home; but he was the same indomitable commander, feared alike by his enemies and his friends. On the 10th of September the President, forty-four guns, and the Constellation, thirty-eight guns, arrived; the John Adams had come in some days before. By one of those strange accidents, so common in the early days of the navy, Commodore Barron had been sent out in the President to relieve Commodore Preble by the government at Washington, which, in those days of slow communication, knew nothing of Preble's actions, except that he was supposed to be bombarding Tripoli. The season of active operations was over, however, and nothing could be done until the following summer. Meanwhile the Bashaw had a very just apprehension of the return of such determined enemies as the Americans another year, and gave unmistakable signs of a willingness to treat. To that he had been brought by Commodore Preble and his gallant officers and crews. Knowing the work to be completed, Preble willingly handed over his command to Commodore Barron. He had the pleasure of giving Decatur, then a post captain,

[1] See the biography of Somers.

the temporary command of the Constitution. Before leaving the squadron, he received every testimonial of respect, and even affection, from the very men who had so bitterly complained of his severe discipline and fiery temper. It was said at the time, that when the squadron first knew him he had not a friend in it, and when he left it he had not an enemy. At that day duelling was common among the privileged classes all over the western world, especially with army and navy officers; but so well did Commodore Preble have his young officers in hand that not a single duel took place in the squadron as long as he commanded it.

The younger officers were supplied with an endless fund of stories about "the old man's" outbursts, and delighted in telling of one especial instance which convulsed every officer and man on the Constitution. A surgeon's mate was needed on the ship, and a little Sicilian doctor applied for the place and got it. He asked the commodore if he must wear uniform. To which the commodore replied, "Certainly." Some days afterward the commodore happened to be in the cabin, wearing his dressing-gown and shaving. Suddenly a gentleman in uniform was announced. Now, in those days flag officers wore two epaulets, the others but one, and the commodore himself was the only man in the squadron who was entitled to wear two. But the stranger had on

two epaulets; besides, a sword, a cocked hat, and an enormous amount of gold lace.

The commodore surveyed this apparition silently, puzzled to make out who this imposing personage was, until, with a smirk, the bedizened Sicilian announced himself as the new surgeon's mate. Furious at his presumption in appearing in such a rig, Preble uttered a howl of rage, which scared the little doctor so that he fled up on deck, closely followed by the commodore, his face covered with lather, and the open razor still in his hand. The little doctor ran along the deck, still pursued by the commodore with the razor, until, reaching the forward end of the ship, the poor Sicilian sprang overboard and struck out swimming for the shore, and was never seen on the ship again.

Preble transferred his flag to the John Adams, and visited Gibraltar, where he was received with distinction by the British officers. He had many friends among them, especially Sir Alexander Ball, one of Nelson's captains; and the great Nelson himself knew and admired the services of the Americans before Tripoli. The Spaniards and Neapolitans, who had suffered much from the corsairs, rejoiced at the drubbing Preble had given them, and at the prospect that the Americans imprisoned in the Bashaw's castle would soon be released. The Pope, Pius the Seventh, said: "This American commodore has

done more to humble the piratical powers of the Barbary coast than all the Christian powers of Europe put together."

Preble sailed for home in December, 1804, and reached Washington the 4th of March, 1805, the day of President Jefferson's first inauguration. The news of his success and the early release of the Philadelphia's officers and men had preceded him. Congress passed a vote of thanks to him and the officers and men under him. President Jefferson, although of the opposite party in politics from Preble, offered him the head of the Navy Department, but it was declined. Preble's health had steadily grown worse, and soon after his return to the United States it was seen that his days were few. He lingered until the summer of 1807, when at Portland, Maine, near his birthplace, he passed away, calmly and resignedly. He left a widow and one child.

Preble was in his forty-seventh year when he died. He was tall and slight, of gentlemanly appearance and polished manners. He left behind him a reputation for great abilities, used with an eye single to his country's good, and a character for probity and courage seldom equalled and never surpassed.

STEPHEN DECATUR

Among the most brilliant and picturesque figures in American naval history stands Stephen Decatur. His achievements were of that dashing and splendid quality which leaves a blaze upon the page of history; and the greatest of them, the destruction of the Philadelphia frigate in the harbor of Tripoli, earned from Lord Nelson the praise of being "the most bold and daring act of the age."

Decatur came justly by his genius for the sea. His father was a captain in the navy of the United States, and his grandfather had been a French naval officer. His was no rude struggle with adversity. The child of gentle people, he entered the navy in 1797, with every advantage of education and training. He was then eighteen years of age, — old for a midshipman, when boys entered at thirteen and were often acting lieutenants at sixteen. Decatur was a handsome man, tall and well made.

Although of a disposition the most generous, he was always of an impetuous and even domineering nature. Strict habits of self-control modified this impetuosity, but to the day of his

Stephen Decatur

death he was subject to gusts of temper whenever he came across any instance of cruelty or meanness or oppression.

A famous example of this was shown shortly before his untimely death. He was then at the summit of his fame, one of the ranking officers of the navy, a navy commissioner, and living in grand style for the times in the city of Washington. He had a favorite dog, and one day, when the dog was lying quietly asleep on the doorstep of Decatur's house, a policeman came along and wantonly shot the poor creature. Decatur happened to see the whole affair, and, rushing out, he gave the policeman then and there a terrific walloping. The policeman, smarting from the injury to his dignity as well as the pounding of his bones, swore out a warrant, and Decatur was commanded to appear before the Mayor of Washington. Furious at the turn of affairs, Decatur flatly refused to obey the constable's summons. In vain the officer pleaded with him to go quietly. Decatur would not budge a step. At last the man brought a posse and proceeded to take him by force. Decatur would not be guilty of the crime of resisting the law, but he proposed to let them get him before the magistrate the best way they could. He not only would not walk a step, but lay down on the floor, and, as he was a large and heavy man, it was a job to lift him up and put him in a carriage ; but at last it was accomplished.

By the time they reached the Mayor's court, Decatur's temper, never mild, was red hot. He proceeded to harangue and even to browbeat the Mayor, who was a very insignificant person compared with Commodore Decatur. At the first blast, though, the Mayor proved that he had a spirit of his own. "Look here, Commodore," said he, "when you are on the quarterdeck of your ship you command. I 'll have you understand that this court-room is my quarterdeck, and I command here, and if I hear another disrespectful word from you I 'll send you to jail for as long as I please." Decatur, paralyzed with astonishment, looked at the Mayor for a long time; then, suddenly bursting into a shout of laughter, apologized for his behavior and submitted to be fined for thrashing the policeman.

Such was the man through life, — daring, generous, overbearing sometimes, but always responding to what was just and courageous in others.

Decatur's first cruise was made in the United States, frigate, forty-four guns, wearing the broad pennant of Commodore Barry. Charles Stewart, afterward the celebrated commodore, was one of the junior lieutenants of the ship, and the heroic and unfortunate Richard Somers was one of the midshipmen.

Decatur and Somers had been schoolmates in Philadelphia, and the association formed there was cemented into a devoted friendship in the steerage of the United States. No two natures

were ever more dissimilar than that of the impetuous Decatur and the gentle and retiring but indomitable Somers. From the beginning they were actuated by a noble professional rivalry; yet their close and affectionate friendship was that of brothers, and their devotion to each other has become a tradition in the navy.

The United States was a splendid frigate, fast and weatherly, and, from the regularity with which she made time on her cruises, was known as "Old Wagoner." Commodore Barry was an old officer who had done good service in the Revolution, and when he took command of the squadron of which "Old Wagoner" was the flagship, he sailed at once for the West Indies, to retaliate on the French ships which had preyed upon American commerce. It was not the good fortune of the United States to meet a frigate of equal force, so that her men and their mettle could be tried, but she did good service in clearing out the French privateers which infested those seas. Decatur saw much active cruising, and gave indications of that dashing courage, masterly seamanship, and fertile resource which he developed the instant he got command of a ship.

He made several cruises, reached his lieutenancy, and was attached to the Essex when she went under Captain Bainbridge to the Mediterranean, in 1802. During the troubles the officers of the Essex had, at Barcelona, with the officers of

the Spanish guardship, Decatur was conspicuous. Having been annoyed and insulted by the Spanish officers, on his way to and from his ship, he went aboard the Spaniard, and asked for her commanding officer. He was absent, and Decatur left this message, which he shouted out in his tremendous voice, on the Spanish quarterdeck: "Tell him that Lieutenant Decatur of the Essex declares him to be a scoundrelly coward; and if Lieutenant Decatur meets him ashore, he will cut his ears off!" A duel in the case was narrowly averted.

At twenty-four Decatur got his first command, the Argus, one of the two sixteen-gun brigs which were to assist Commodore Preble in the reduction of the Barbary powers. This was a heavier vessel than a young officer of Decatur's rank was entitled to, and he was given the command of her only to take her out of the Mediterranean, where he was to exchange with Isaac Hull, then a lieutenant commandant, and take Hull's vessel, the Enterprise, schooner, of twelve guns. The Enterprise, like the great frigates Constitution and Constellation, was a favorite of fortune. She had a glorious record for so small a vessel, and fought ten spirited actions during her career, winding up with the capture of the Boxer in the war of 1812–15. She was lucky also in escaping many times from superior force, and had an uninterrupted course of success. Her good fortune really consisted in the

people who manned her, and the officers who commanded her, — of whom Decatur was not the least distinguished. He had the good fortune to have as his first lieutenant in the little schooner James Lawrence, a man after Decatur's own heart, who was worthy of his ship and his captain.

Decatur was one of the young commanders who took part in the council of war called by Commodore Preble at Gibraltar, in the autumn of 1803, at which the peppery commodore was so disgusted that he called them "a parcel of schoolboys." But most of them were shortly destined to immortality.

After collecting his force, Preble sailed for Syracuse, that historic city, beautiful in its decay. The object of the American commander was to establish a base of supplies, and to get the co-operation of the King of the Two Sicilies, who was also at war with the Bashaw of Tripoli. It was while at Syracuse, in the autumn of 1803, that the plan to destroy the Philadelphia in the harbor of Tripoli was determined upon. The credit of the original idea has been separately claimed for Preble, Bainbridge, and Decatur; and the fact probably is that it occurred at practically the same time to each one of them. Every one of Preble's dashing young captains desired the honor of making the attempt, and the fact that Decatur obtained the distinction is presumptive proof that he had a share in the first incep-

tion of the plan. Stewart's claim to a part in the undertaking was so strong that to him fell the honor of supporting, in the Siren, Decatur's proposed attack.

In order to look over the ground, Preble in the Constitution, accompanied by Decatur in the Enterprise, sailed for Tripoli, in December, 1803. Decatur, with his characteristic boldness, offered to make the attempt with the Enterprise; but Commodore Preble prudently concluded to use a ketch, the Meshouda, which Decatur had lately captured and which was of a build and rig common in Mediterranean waters.

As Decatur meant to get inside the harbor of Tripoli by stratagem, it was important to have a vessel that would not attract attention. The ketch was fittingly renamed the Intrepid, and preparations were begun for the desperate adventure with her.

Decatur was extremely anxious, as was Stewart, to cut the Philadelphia out; but Commodore Preble, as bold as they were, but older and more prudent, saw the insurmountable difficulties in the way of bringing so large a ship as the Philadelphia out of a dangerous and unknown harbor such as Tripoli. He therefore gave strict orders that no attempt should be made to carry her out, but that she should be destroyed at her moorings; and the commodore was certain to be obeyed.

The Intrepid was converted into a fire-ship, or

"infernal." She was filled with combustibles, and it was designed that she should steal in at night in disguise, throw the combustibles into the Philadelphia, fire them, and then make a race for her life.

The nature of this enterprise required men of extraordinary steadiness as well as courage; but they could be easily supplied from the American squadron. It was intended to man and officer the Intrepid as far as possible from the Enterprise; and in pursuance of this, on the afternoon of the 3d of February, 1803, all hands on the Enterprise were called up and aft. Decatur then stated the nature of the service for which the Intrepid was destined, — a service of heroic possibilities but appalling danger, — and then called for sixty-two volunteers. Instead of sixty-two men, the whole ship's company down to the smallest boy volunteered with a cheer. This was what any captain would have desired, and Decatur was forced to make a choice. He selected sixty-two of the youngest and most active men in the crew, who showed their gratification by saying, "Thankee, sir," as each man was told off. He could make no choice among his lieutenants, but took them all — Lawrence, Joseph Bainbridge, and Thorn — and one of his midshipmen, the indomitable Macdonough, the rest being necessarily left to take care of the ship. He was compelled to make a draft of junior officers from the Constitution, and asked for midshipmen Morris, Laws,

Izard, Davis, and Rowe. There was also a surgeon, Dr. Heermann, and Salvatore Catalano, a Sicilian pilot, who, in return for his services, was made a master in the American navy, and had an honorable career in it.

On the evening of the 3d of February the Intrepid sailed upon her glorious expedition, accompanied by the Siren, whose character as a ship of war was thoroughly concealed. The ketch was to pass for a merchant vessel from Malta, and her officers had the costumes of Maltese sailors in which to disguise themselves. The two vessels reached the entrance to the harbor of Tripoli on the 9th of February, but a terrific storm arose, which drove them off. For six days they were storm-tossed in the gulf of Sydra, but on the 16th of February they found themselves together again off Tripoli. The evening was mild and beautiful, and the wind was so light that the Siren was almost becalmed in the offing, but the Intrepid met a wandering breeze that carried her within the rocky harbor. Once inside, a good breeze was blowing, which swept them rapidly forward, and threatened to bring the Intrepid up with the Philadelphia before it was quite dark enough to do the work meant for her. As it would not do to excite suspicion by taking in sail, Decatur had buckets and sails towed astern which acted as a drag, and brought the ketch in very slowly. When Decatur noticed that the

Siren in the offing had no wind and consequently could be of no assistance to him, he remarked cheerfully to his men, "Never mind; the fewer the number the greater the glory."

The ketch sailed leisurely in, having the appearance of a merchant ship from a Mediterranean port, after a considerable voyage.

The crew had been sent below, and only a few officers, disguised as Maltese sailors, stood or sat about the deck. Before them lay the Bashaw's castle, with its menacing battlements, and all around the harbor was a chain of forts that could make a circle of fire for an invader. Directly under the guns of the castle loomed the tall black hull of the Philadelphia, flying the piratical flag of Tripoli, while moored near her were three smaller cruisers and nineteen gunboats.

The moon had risen, and by its clear illumination the "infernal" steered straight across the blue waters of the harbor for the Philadelphia. When about two hundred yards off, Salvatore Catalano, the pilot, hailed the Tripolitan officer of the deck on the Philadelphia, who lounged over the rail smoking a long pipe.

"This is the ketch Stella, from Malta," he said in the *lingua franca* of the East. "We lost our anchors and cables in the gale, and would like to lie by you during the night."

"Your request is unusual, but we will grant it," answered the Tripolitan officer.

The officer then asked what vessel it was that was lying in the offing. The pilot, with much readiness, replied that it was the Transfer, a cruiser lately bought from the British by the Tripolitan government, and which was daily expected. This answer seemed to satisfy the Tripolitan, and a boat then put off from the Philadelphia with a fast, and at the same moment a boat also put off, under the command of Lawrence, from the Intrepid. On meeting, Lawrence coolly took the fast from the Tripolitan boat, and soon had the hawser aboard of the ketch. A moment more and the supposed Maltese sailors, in their jackets and red fezzes, roused on the hawser and breasted the ketch along under the Philadelphia's quarter. Had the slightest suspicion been aroused then, they would have been blown out of the water by a single broadside. But the Americans retained their coolness in their desperate situation.

Presently the Intrepid drew out from the black shadow of the frigate's hull into a great patch of white moonlight. The Tripolitans saw the anchors on the deck, with the cables coiled around them. Instantly a cry rang through the ship, "Americanos! Americanos!"

At the same moment the Intrepid came grinding up against the frigate's stern quarter, and, as if by magic, was alive with men. Decatur shouted, "Board!" and the Americans dashed at the frigate's deck.

Decatur, and two midshipmen, Morris and Laws, leaped at the same moment into the chain plates. Decatur and Morris made a spring for the rail; Decatur's foot slipped, else he would have been first upon the Philadelphia's deck; but Morris, an agile young midshipman, was a moment before him. Midshipman Laws dashed at a port, and would have been before Morris in entering the ship, but the pistols in his boarding-belt caught for a moment between the gun and the port, and he was third to stand upon the deck. The rest of the Americans swarmed into the ship.

The Tripolitans, completely surprised, yet fought desperately. They had been accounted the best hand-to-hand fighters in the world, but they were no match for the Americans. Within fifteen minutes every one of them had been cut down or driven overboard, and the Philadelphia was once more an American ship. Meanwhile lights had been moving about on shore, and the vessels and forts saw that something was happening on the Philadelphia, but not enough could be seen to justify them in firing on their own ship. In a few minutes more, though, smoke was pouring from the ports, and flames were running up her tar-soaked rigging. The Americans, with almost incredible swiftness, had hoisted powder aboard the ship and fired her in a dozen places. Two guns, double-shotted, were dragged amidships and pointed down the main hatch to blow her bottom

out. They then leaped into the ketch; but at that moment the most awful danger of that terrible yet glorious night awaited them. The fast became jammed, and the jigger of the ketch caught fire as it flapped against the burning frigate, while below, on the Intrepid's deck, lay all her powder exposed. The officers, undismayed however, drew their swords and hacked at the hawser until it parted. Then, under sweeps and sails, the Intrepid made for the offing, the men pulling for their lives, while the ships and forts, now thoroughly aroused, opened all their batteries on this daring invader. But the shot fell short, and raised only showers of spray, at which the Americans laughed and jeered.

The Philadelphia was now ablaze from rail to truck, and sea and sky were lighted up by the flames of the burning ship. Her guns began to go off as the fire reached them, and she poured a cannonade from every quarter. The ketch was plainly visible as she made rapidly for the offing, and a hundred guns were trained on her. At this supreme moment the Americans gave one last proof of their contempt of danger. The men stopped rowing, and every officer and man, rising to his feet, gave three thundering American cheers. Then they bent to their oars with giant strokes, and in a little while were safe under the Siren's guns. They had not lost a man in the glorious achievement.

The Siren, meanwhile, in the offing, had hoisted out her boats, and was ready to assist the Intrepid, in case she needed it. The progress of the ketch was plainly visible until she was lost in the shadow of the Philadelphia's black hull. In a few minutes a single rocket skyward showed the anxious watchers that the Philadelphia was boarded; and almost at once the blaze rushed up the rigging, and enveloped the tall hull, lighting up the night with a lurid glare, while the guns of the doomed frigate and those of the castle, the ships, and the forts thundered out. Then they knew that the great enterprise was accomplished. The boats pulled toward the harbor entrance; soon the ketch had shot across the illuminated water, and had reached them. Decatur, jumping into one of the Siren's boats, was quickly pulled toward the brig. Stewart, standing in the gangway, saw the boat approach, and a man, in a sailor's round jacket and a fez, sprang over the gangway, into his arms. It was Decatur.

Fifteen days after leaving Syracuse, the ketch and the brig were seen standing in the harbor, the signal of success flying from the Intrepid's masthead. For this splendid adventure Decatur was made a post-captain, his commission dating from the 16th of February, and the officers and men were rewarded.

Before, however, receiving his commission, Decatur was yet to do glorious things in the bom-

bardment of Tripoli during the following summer. Commodore Preble, in arranging the boat attacks, which he supported by the batteries of the "Old Ironsides," and all his brigs and schooners, gave the command of the right division to Richard Somers, Decatur's bosom friend, and the left division to Decatur. On the 2d of August the first attack was made. The Tripolitans had a flotilla of fourteen gunboats to resist the six the Americans could muster; and they had, in reserve, behind the rocks in the harbor, five more gunboats and several heavy galleys, besides their forts, batteries, and larger clubs. The attack was begun about half past one in the afternoon, the whole force standing in; the Constitution approaching as close as possible and pouring in many broadsides against the forts, the brigs and schooners supporting the gunboats, while the latter dashed at the Tripolitan gunboats and galleys with a swiftness and impetuosity that were simply tremendous. The attack soon assumed a character of hand-to-hand fighting that is seldom seen in modern days. Decatur's own vessel laid aboard a large Tripolitan gunboat, and in spite of the most desperate resistance, grappled with her. She was divided in the middle by a long narrow hatchway, and in this the Tripolitans mustered to drive back the Americans when they entered. Immediately Decatur was over the side, followed by his lieutenant, Mr. Thorne, by Macdonough,

and all the Americans in the gunboat's crew. They advanced together with pikes and cutlasses, and then ensued a contest, man to man, fighting every inch of the way, which resulted in cutting down or driving overboard every Tripolitan officer and man.

Just as the Tripolitan ensign was hauled down, it was seen that James Decatur, Decatur's younger brother, who was in command of another gunboat and had carried her into action with great spirit, had fallen by a shot from a Tripolitan which had surrendered and then basely resumed firing. James Decatur was carried aboard the Constitution to die, but it was no time to indulge in private griefs; and Decatur, without knowing whether his brother were living or dead, turned upon the next foe. This was another gun-vessel, which was commanded by a gigantic Tripolitan, who seemed to court rather than avoid a hand-to-hand contest with the Americans.

Decatur ran him aboard, and then with a cheer the Americans leaped into the gunboat. Seeing the force with which they had to contend, Decatur waited until his men could form a line. They then advanced resolutely, led by their officers. They were greatly outnumbered, but by standing together they made the most of their number. The Tripolitan captain and Decatur soon met face to face. The Tripolitan, a much larger and more powerful man than Decatur,

stood on tiptoe to deal a more tremendous blow. Decatur rushed at him with a pike. The Tripolitan wrenched the pike from him, and raised it to strike. Decatur then drew his sword, and in trying to parry the pike, the sword broke off at the hilt, and the pike entered Decatur's breast. Pulling it out, he grappled with the Tripolitan, and both came to the deck together. The Tripolitan attempted to draw his dagger ; but Decatur, firmly grasping his arm, managed to get a small pistol from his pocket, and fired it. With a scream the Tripolitan relinquished his hold and rolled over. As Decatur rose to his feet, another Tripolitan raised his sword ; as the blow was about to descend on Decatur's head, Reuben James, a powerful young sailor, threw up his arm, and took the blow, which almost severed his arm from his body. The Americans were now beginning to get a little the advantage ; and by coolness and resolution they were soon enabled to get possession of the gunboat. The Tripolitan loss showed the nature of the fighting, fifty-two men being killed and wounded out of a total of eighty in the two captured gunboats. The loss of the Americans was relatively small, owing to their plan of standing together and attacking as a body.[1]

Four more of these ferocious attacks, combined

[1] It was after this attack that the celebrated scene occurred in the Constitution between Decatur and Commodore Preble, as related in Preble's life.

with a terrific cannonade from the Constitution, and the assistance from the brigs and schooners, lost the Tripolitans many of their most serviceable craft, and made those that were left very shy of coming outside the reefs to meet the "Americanos." The great guns on the Constitution had knocked to pieces many of the more exposed land batteries, and brought down the Bashaw's tone immeasurably. He was then anxious to negotiate, but Commodore Preble would listen to nothing but the unconditional surrender of Bainbridge and his men.

The loss of the Americans was small in numbers but great in value during the bombardment, and was confined chiefly to the gunboats. In the second attack, on the 7th of August, one of the American gunboats blew up, killing her brave commander, Lieutenant Caldwell, and several others. When the smoke cleared away after the awful explosion, it was seen that the forward part of the vessel still floated. On it was the long twenty-six-pounder, which was her chief weapon, and which the gun's crew, directed by Midshipman Spence, had just loaded. With as much coolness as if there had been a whole vessel instead of a half one beneath them, the gun was fired, the eleven men on the wreck gave three cheers, led by the midshipman, and then sprang into the water. All were picked up, and fought during the rest of the action.

There was another attack on the 28th of August, and again on the 3d of September. In this last the Constitution bore the brunt of the Tripolitan fire, and did fearful execution with her heavy guns. And on the 4th of September occurred the terrible tragedy of the blowing up of the ketch Intrepid.[1]

The beginning of the autumn marked the end of the season for active operations, and the American squadron withdrew, with a promise to return the next season and do yet more damage, — a calamity which the Bashaw avoided by promptly giving up the American prisoners the next spring, when the Americans, true to their word, returned in greater force. A relief squadron which had been sent out from the United States arrived just at the close of the campaign before Tripoli. It brought out Decatur's commission as a post-captain, as well as lesser promotions for the other young commanding officers. Commodore Preble, on being relieved by Commodore Barron, turned over the Constitution to Decatur, who thus, at twenty-five, commanded what was probably the finest frigate in the world. His rank, however, as the youngest post-captain in the navy did not entitle him to keep her very long, and he was transferred to the Congress, a smart thirty-eight-gun frigate. She was in the squadron of Commodore Rodgers, which, after the humbling

[1] See the biography of Richard Somers.

of Tripoli, was engaged in bringing the Bey of Tunis to terms. Commodore Rodgers sent Decatur, who was well known to the heads of Barbary powers, to negotiate a treaty with Tunis. The Bey at first refused to receive him. Decatur returned to his ship, which was cleared for action, and sent a message saying that the Bey must decide at once between war and peace. The Bey succumbed immediately, and not only begged for peace, but asked that the Congress should convey a Tunisian envoy to the United States. This was rather more than Decatur had bargained for, particularly as he had to give up a part of his quarters to the Tunisian envoy and his suite. But having succeeded rather better than he expected, Decatur took the party on board and returned to the United States, reaching home in 1805.

He was received with praise, admiration, and the highest personal and official favor. He was given good commands, and a few years after he had gone out to the Mediterranean to command a little twelve-gun schooner, he again went out in command of a splendid squadron, his broad pennant flying on the mighty Constitution. He was sent to demand reparation from the Dey of Algiers for certain injuries to American citizens. The American consul went in person to see the Dey, who sat in state, looking through the open window at the formidable force with which Deca-

tur was prepared to enforce his demands. The consul began by saying, significantly, that the squadron was commanded by Commodore Decatur. The Dey, gravely combing his beard with a diamond comb, said: "I know this Decatur. He is the man who burnt the frigate at Tripoli. Hum! Why do the Americans send wild young men to treat with old powers?" Nevertheless, he very promptly gave all the satisfaction demanded by the "wild young man."

On the outbreak of hostilities with Great Britain in 1811–12, Decatur got the command of the United States, — "Old Wagoner," the stanch and weatherly frigate in which he had made his first cruise with his beloved Somers. In her he made the second capture of a frigate in that war, Hull having preceded him in the capture of the Guerrière by the Constitution.

Off Madeira, on the 25th of October, the United States sighted the Macedonian,[1] a magnificent thirty-eight-gun frigate, commanded by Captain Carden. Decatur and Carden were personal friends, and before the war broke out had often discussed the relative fighting powers of their ships. Decatur's black servant had lis-

[1] As in the case of the fight of the Constitution with the Guerrière and the Java, the Macedonian was a lighter ship, with fewer men and guns than the Constitution. But the execution done in every case was far beyond the difference between the American ship and her antagonist.

tened to these talks as he stood behind his master's chair. Captain Carden frequently said, "No, my dear Decatur. Your men are brave, but not experienced; and when they meet a British ship of equal force, with the best intentions to do their duty, they will not know how to fight." Cuffee remembered this, and as soon as it was known on "Old Wagoner" that the approaching frigate was the Macedonian, he very prudently retired to the lower hold, and hid behind a hogshead.

The action began with the greatest spirit on both sides, the ships keeping up a furious cannonade at close quarters, with a heavy sea on and a good breeze blowing. The Americans showed great superiority in gunnery, and although the British fought with a gallantry worthy of British tars, and their officers nobly encouraged them by word and example, in seventeen minutes from the time the first broadside struck the Macedonian all was over, and her colors were hauled down. She had suffered terribly, more than a third of her men being killed and wounded. She lost so many men at the guns that the marines were called upon to work the batteries. On the American ship only twelve men were killed and wounded, and the marines during the whole battle were drawn up in the waist of the ship, with nothing to do. This, however, was much more trying than fighting, as they had to stand

as if they were on parade, while shot and shell screamed a few inches above their heads. The men, however, showed the utmost steadiness, and acted as well as looked as if they were merely at Sunday morning quarters. When the Macedonian struck, it was plain from the way she was cut up that she had made a good and gallant defence. As Captain Carden came over the side, he offered his sword to Decatur, who refused to take it, saying, —

"I cannot take the sword of a man who has so bravely defended his ship."

The solemn silence of the occasion was broken by Cuffee, who, the danger being over, had crawled up out of the hold, and appeared upon the quarterdeck at that moment, just in time to bawl out, —

"I say, Marse Carden, what you think now 'bout de way dem 'Mericans fights!"

It was several weeks before the United States reached home, and during that time Captain Carden was Decatur's guest in the cabin. Decatur's first letter to his wife after the capture of the Macedonian says: "All my pleasure is spoiled by poor Carden's sorrow;" for Captain Carden knew nothing of the previous capture of the Guerrière and of the Java, which followed shortly after, and thought himself to be the first and only English captain who had surrendered his ship. On reaching the United

States, Decatur and his officers received the thanks of Congress, and a gold medal for their gallant conduct.

Decatur had looked forward to another active cruise in "Old Wagoner," but he soon found himself penned up at New London by a large blockading force. Decatur's impetuous nature fretted and chafed under this, and in 1814, realizing the impossibility of the United States getting to sea, he got command of the President, of forty-four guns, then lying at New York. Decatur took command of her with bright anticipations. New York bay was closely watched by British cruisers, but Decatur had no fears that he should not be able to get out. Accordingly, on a dark and stormy night in January, 1814, he picked up his anchor, and made for the open sea; but before daylight the pilots had run the frigate aground near Sandy Hook, where for an hour and a half she lay pounding on the bar. She got off by the rising of the tide, but she was so hagged and twisted that her back was nearly broken, her masts sprung, and her sailing qualities so impaired that she stood but a small chance of escape should she fall in with an enemy. Unable by reason of the wind to return to New York for repairs, the President proceeded to sea, and by daylight found herself surrounded by a British squadron, consisting of the Majestic, razee, and the Endymion, of forty guns, and the Tenedos

and Nymph, light frigates. Then began a fight as well as a race for life, which lasted thirty hours. The Endymion got near enough for a bloody contest, in which she was badly crippled and left behind, the President making a desperate though lame attempt at flight from her antagonists. But it was in vain. The Tenedos and Nymph gained on her, and it was soon known to all on board that the President was a doomed ship. Three of her five lieutenants lay dead upon her decks, while among the mortally wounded was Midshipman Richard Dale, son of the famous Commodore Dale, of Revolutionary fame. The killed and wounded among the crew were numerous, and Decatur himself received a painful injury.

His people, who had never seen him except in the light of triumph and success, were curious to observe how he would stand impending defeat. But never was he calmer and cooler. At one time, seeing he could handle the Endymion alone, he formed the desperate plan of boarding her, transferring his people to her, and abandoning the President. The proposition was received with cheers. One of his youngest midshipmen,[1] a lad of fourteen, said out aloud, in Decatur's hearing, —

"I never can get over the side of that ship, as small as I am."

[1] The late Captain Foxhall Parker, 1st.

"Oh, yes, you can," replied Decatur, smiling. "I will pick you up and throw you over myself."

The Endymion, seeing that the President must be shortly overpowered by the rest of the squadron, very sensibly refused to close, and fell out of the chase in a helpless condition, every sail being shot away from her.

It was now night, and the President hoped to escape in the darkness, which was extreme. But about eleven o'clock the Pomone ranged up under her lee and poured in a broadside, while the Tenedos was closing in on the weather quarter, and the Majestic was within gunshot astern. The President hauled her colors down, and Decatur offered his sword to Captain Hayes of the Majestic, the ranking officer present. It was refused in the same noble words which Decatur had used toward Captain Carden: "I cannot accept the sword of a man who has so bravely defended his ship."

Decatur was taken to Bermuda, where he was received with the highest distinction by the great Admiral, Lord Cochrane, and all of the British officers. At a splendid dinner given him by the British naval officers, some one was tactless enough to allude to the capture of the President, at which Lord Cochrane promptly said, —

"The President was mobbed, sir, — simply mobbed."

Decatur and his officers were soon paroled, and sent home in a special frigate. Peace was declared a few days after, and at New London, where Decatur was landed, there was a grand celebration of the treaty of peace, on the 22d of February. The British frigate in which he had been returned took part in the celebration, and the British and Americans united, as generous enemies who have become friends should in observing the glorious occasion.

After the peace, Decatur hoisted his broad pennant on the Guerrière,[1] and commanded a fine squadron in the Mediterranean, where his name was always a power. On his return from this cruise he was made one of the three navy commissioners who were at the head of the Navy Department in those days. He had amassed a comfortable fortune, and built a fine house in Washington, near the White House, and had apparently entered upon a long career of peace and prosperity; but it was not to be.

It is distressing to chronicle the melancholy end of so glorious a life. In those days duelling was thought justifiable and even obligatory on occasions. Decatur lost his life in March, 1820, near Washington, in a duel with Commodore Barron, concerning some things he had

[1] Not the original ship, captured and blown up by Commodore Hull, but one built and named for her.

said about Barron many years before. His death and the manner of it were universally deplored, and when the anxious multitude who surrounded his house in Washington was told that he was no more, Reuben James, the old sailor who had once saved Decatur's life at the risk of his own, cried out, "The navy has lost its mainmast."

Decatur was the author of that patriotic saying which is heard from many American lips and is deeply engraved in every American breast: "My country, may she always be right; but, right or wrong, my country!"

RICHARD SOMERS

The name and fame of Richard Somers will always be of tender and regretful interest. His gentle and lovable character, his quiet, undaunted courage, the daring enterprise in which he lost his life at the early age of twenty-four, all unite in making him one of those young heroes who are never forgotten. As he died young, so must he ever remain, a figure of heroic youth, untouched by age or time, illumined by a melancholy glory. Few circumstances of Somers's early life are known. Of a singularly modest and reserved nature, he seldom spoke of himself, and beyond the bare facts of his boyhood and young manhood, little has been gleaned by his various biographers. His father was a man of standing and importance, and represented his district in New Jersey in the Colonial Congress. Somers Point, opposite Cape May, was the family property. Richard Somers, the youngest of his father's children, was born in Philadelphia in 1779, whither his family had removed. It is said that his father was a firm friend and supporter of General Washington from the beginning of his command of the Continental army, and that Washington bestowed much

Richard Somers

kindly notice upon the lad, Richard Somers. Among Somers's possessions was a ring, which he valued highly, containing the hair of Washington.

The boy went to a "dame's school" in Philadelphia with Stephen Decatur; and there began that devoted friendship which lasted through Somers's brief life. No two natures were ever more contrasted than Somers and Decatur. Somers was mild in the extreme, of the gentlest manners, silent, and somewhat reserved. Decatur was a young volcano in energy, and pursued all his objects in life with a fire and impetuosity almost inconceivable. The affection between the two seemed to be something deeper and stronger than brotherhood, and joined with it was a professional rivalry that only such an affection could have prevented from becoming enmity.

Somers was left an orphan when a lad not more than twelve years old. He had, however, an uncle who was a second father to him, and he inherited a respectable property. There is no record of Somers having gone to sea before he received his appointment as midshipman, of the same date as Decatur's, 1798. But a number of circumstances indicate that he was already a capable seaman when he got his midshipman's warrant to the United States, frigate of forty-four guns. He was made master's mate of the hold almost immediately on joining the ship, a place given the steadiest and readiest of the midshipmen,

and it is assumed that he would not have been selected had he not known something of his profession.

The United States, which wore the broad pennant of Commodore Barry, was engaged in active cruising in the West Indies during the hostilities with France in 1799–1801, but never came to close quarters with a ship of her own size during the cruise. Somers seems to have won the goodwill of every one on board, including Commodore Barry and the future Commodore Stewart, who was the first lieutenant. Somers's mildness seems to have been misunderstood for weakness, and on hearing of some aspersions upon him, Somers determined, in his cool and deliberate manner, to show the stuff that was in him. Duelling was then a common practice among officers of the army and navy, as well as among all those who classed themselves as gentlemen. Somers therefore challenged three of his tormentors among the midshipmen, and arranged that the three duels should be fought one immediately after another. Decatur was to be his second in all these affairs, and it is a grotesque circumstance that the origin of the reflections cast on Somers was from the unresenting way with which he put up with Decatur's chaff.

In the first two duels Somers received two slight wounds which prevented him from standing up. Decatur eagerly insisted upon being

allowed to take Somers's place after the first hurt received by Somers; but Somers refused, and exchanged shots for the third time, sitting on the ground and held up in the arms of Decatur. It was the first and last time that his courage was ever doubted, and his peace-loving and gentle nature was esteemed at its true value ever afterward.

In 1801 the United States returned home, and Somers's next orders were to the Boston, of twenty-eight guns, in which, at the age of twenty-two, he found himself in the responsible situation of first lieutenant. The Boston was commanded by Captain Daniel McNeill, an old Revolutionary captain, who was one of the characters of the old navy. He was a fine seaman and a man of resolution and integrity, but not very amenable to authority. The Boston was ordered to proceed to Europe with Chancellor Livingston, who was to arrange terms of peace with France. They encountered heavy weather, and Captain McNeill carried sail in such a way as to astonish his young officers; but he had in his first lieutenant a man almost as well versed in seamanship as himself.

Perhaps no young officer in the navy of that day was so well adapted, by his conciliatory and amiable manners, to be the first lieutenant of such a man as Captain McNeill. The Boston had been ordered to report to Commodore Richard

Dale, who was Captain McNeill's senior in rank, although much his junior in age. But Captain McNeill seems to have had no notion of putting himself under the orders of a man so much younger than himself, and although he cruised for nearly two years in the Mediterranean, ostensibly hunting for the flagship, he managed by the greatest adroitness never to set eyes on her. He was meanwhile very actively engaged in his duty, and gave convoy to American vessels, frightened off the piratical vessels of the Barbary powers, and even blockaded Tripoli for a time; but he was always just a little too late or a trifle too early to join the flagship. The cruise afforded a multitude of amusing anecdotes about this doughty but eccentric captain, whose character and attainments commanded respect, in spite of his oddities. Once, at Malaga, at a grand dinner given to Captain McNeill and his officers, as also to some Swedish officers of high rank, the American captain was seated between two Swedish admirals. At nine o'clock a midshipman entered the room, according to orders, and reported to Captain McNeill that his boat waited. "What did you say?" asked the captain. The midshipman repeated his announcement, Somers and the other American officers present waiting in agony for what Captain McNeill would say or do next. The captain again asked the midshipman what he said, bawling out, "These bloody

Swedes keep up such a chattering I can't hear what you say!"

Another one of Captain McNeill's adventures was when, lying in a French port, he wished to test how quickly his ship could be got under way. Three of his own officers were on shore, but three French naval officers happened to be on board; so, coolly remarking that he would hold on to the French officers to keep up his complement, he put to sea. It was several months before the Frenchmen could return to France, and meanwhile they had been published as deserters.

At another time, taking a fancy to a regimental band which came aboard the Boston in an Italian port, he sailed for America with the musicians, and it was several years before they were all returned to Italy.

The Boston soon after this returned to the United States, and the administration of the navy winked at Captain McNeill's peccadilloes, in view of the actual service he had done during his memorable cruise.

It was at this time that the government determined to send a force out, under Commodore Preble, to crush Tripoli. Somers got the command of the Nautilus, one of the four small vessels that were built and sent out, Stewart getting another, and Decatur a third. Somers was now in his twenty-fifth year, handsome, well made, and his naturally dark skin still darker from

wind and sun. His manners were polished, and he was as prepossessing, in his quiet way, as the dashing Decatur. Somers's black eyes were noticeably melancholy, and after his untimely death those who loved him fancied they had always seen in his countenance some premonition of his doom.

The officers who were to command these little vessels superintended their building, as there were then no regular navy-yards in the country. The Nautilus, under Somers's command, was the first to sail, and the first to arrive at Gibraltar, in July, 1803. She was a beautiful little schooner, of twelve guns, with a crew of nearly a hundred men. She was, however, very small to cross the Atlantic, and several times during the voyage Somers was hailed and offered assistance by friendly shipmasters, who thought the gallant little vessel must have been blown out of her course.

Somers was one of the boy captains whose youth so disgusted Commodore Preble when he met them first on their arrival at Gibraltar. But the commodore found in Somers, as early as with any, the stuff of which these young officers were made. Somers was very actively engaged in the labors and cruises which occupied the winter of 1803–4, preparing to attack Tripoli in the summer. He sympathized ardently with Decatur in the splendid exploit of the destruction

of the Philadelphia. He was anxious to assist him with the Nautilus, but Stewart's superior rank and larger command entitled him to support Decatur, which he did in the Siren. Decatur's success inspired every young captain in the squadron with a noble desire to equal it, and none more than the quiet and self-contained Somers.

The preparations for the bombardment of Tripoli continued, and on the 3d of August the first attack took place. Commodore Preble gave the command of the right division of gun-vessels to Somers, and the left to Decatur. Somers was supposed to be Decatur's senior at the time, but the post-captain's commission which the Congress had given Decatur as a reward for the destruction of the Philadelphia was then on its way, and arrived a few days after; while the same ship brought Somers's promotion to a master commandant.

The story of those splendid attacks has been told in the biographies of Preble and Decatur.[1] On the memorable 3d of August, when the captives of the Philadelphia in the Bashaw's dungeons first heard from the guns of the squadron the thundering demand for the release of the prisoners, Somers, like Decatur, performed prodigies of valor. The harbor of Tripoli is crossed by a great reef, above the water, and on which forts and

[1] See the biography of Decatur.

batteries were mounted. At the western end is a narrow opening of about two hundred yards, while within the reef the rocks and shoals were so numerous and so difficult that the best seamanship and the greatest courage were necessary for an attacking enemy. The guns from the forts and ships nearer the town, too, could be concentrated on any small craft which passed through this western passage. These desperate risks did not deter Somers and Decatur, who went inside and fell upon the Tripolitan gun-vessels with the fury of fiends. On the 3d of August, while Decatur was engaged in his terrible encounter with the Tripolitan, Somers in a single small gun-vessel held at bay five gun-vessels, each larger than his own, and fought with savage determination. The wind was driving him straight on the rocks, and he had to keep backing his sweeps to save himself from destruction, while fighting like a lion. The Constitution, seeing his critical position, came to his support, and, opening her batteries on the Tripolitans, succeeded in driving them still farther within the reefs, while Somers brought his gallant little gun-vessel out in triumph.

Four of these dashing attacks were made, in every one of which Somers and Decatur commanded the two boat divisions. Both had many narrow escapes. Once, while Somers was leaning against the flagstaff of his little vessel, as she was on her way to attack, he saw a round

shot coming. He jumped aside, and the next moment the flagstaff was shattered just at the point where his head had rested. His knowledge of the interior of the harbor, where the Tripolitans had a large number of vessels at anchor, inspired him with the design of leading a forlorn hope, — to strike one great blow, and, if necessary, to die for his country the next moment. At last he got Commodore Preble's permission to carry out the daring attempt, which, heroic in its conception, yet makes one of the saddest pages in the history of the American navy.

The plan was to fit up as a fire-ship, or "infernal," the ketch Intrepid, in which Decatur had won immortality in the same harbor, take it in, and explode it among the Tripolitan fleet. Somers earnestly begged Commodore Preble for the honor of leading this desperate expedition, and the commodore at last agreed. It would be necessary to pour one hundred barrels of gunpowder into the hold of the ketch in order to make it effective as a fire-ship, and before consenting to this, the Commodore warned Somers that so much powder must not be allowed to fall into the hands of the Tripolitans. It was during the Napoleonic wars, powder was in great demand, and the Tripolitans were supposed to be short of it. After this interview Somers expressed the determination to be blown up rather than to be captured.

The details of the attack were worked out most carefully. Besides the powder, the Intrepid was to carry a large stock of splintered wood; and about two hundred shells, with their fuses prepared, were laid on her decks, to add their horrors to the explosion. The brave adventurers had two chances for their lives, in having two boats in which to escape from the ketch. One of them was a very fast four-oared boat from Somers's own vessel, the Nautilus, and the other was a six-oared cutter from the Constitution. Somers was to be in his own boat, while Lieutenant Henry Wadsworth[1] commanded the Constitution's cutter. Ten sailors were to be taken along, making twelve persons in all; but the number was increased to thirteen by a little midshipman, Joseph Israel, who smuggled himself into the Constitution's boat.

Somers had consulted at every step his bosom friend Decatur, and Charles Stewart, with whom he had begun his naval life in "Old Wagoner." Decatur, in his own vessel, the Argus, and Lieutenant-Commandant Smith, of the Vixen, and Somers's vessel, the Nautilus, under the command of his first lieutenant, Washington Reed, were to support the dauntless party in the boats as far as possible.

Everything being ready, on the day after the

[1] Lieutenant Wadsworth was the uncle of Longfellow, and the poet was named for this gallant gentleman and brave sailor.

desperate boat attack of the 3d of September, in the afternoon, Somers appeared on the deck of his vessel, and, having the crew piped up, addressed them, telling frankly the hazardous nature of the attempt he was to make, and calling for four volunteers who would go with him to advance one step ahead of the line. For answer, every man and boy on the Nautilus advanced two steps. This brave spirit was deeply gratifying to Somers, and he was forced to make a selection. He chose four of his best seamen, — James Simms, Thomas Tompline, James Harris, and William Keith.

On the Constitution the same spirit was shown, and Lieutenant Wadsworth selected the six men he needed from the hundreds who were eager to go. The Constitution's sailors were William Harrison, Robert Clark, Hugh McCormick, Jacob Williams, Peter Renner, and Isaac Downes. The names of these humble men deserve to be recorded, for each one was worthy to do, to dare, and to die with his officers, — Somers, Wadsworth, and Israel.

When the last preparations were made, on the afternoon of September 4, 1804, and the men were assembled on the Nautilus's deck, with the boats lowered, Somers addressed the ten sailors. He told them that he wanted no man with him who would not rather be blown up than surrender to the Tripolitans. The men responded

with a cheer; and it was found that each one had privately asked Somers for the dangerous honor of applying the match when the time for the explosion came. They then said good-bye to their shipmates, and indicated what they wished done with their belongings if they should never return. Somers was accompanied to the Intrepid by Decatur and Stewart, who remained with him until the dusk of the September evening warned them that the solemn hour had come. On parting from them, Somers, who was as tranquil as ever, took a ring from his finger, and, breaking it in three parts, gave one piece to Decatur, one to Stewart, and kept the third. The last man over the Intrepid's side was Lieutenant Reed, who, as Somers's first lieutenant, was to command the Nautilus.

The night had fallen when the Constitution's boat joined the ketch, and in it was found the little fifteen-year-old midshipman, Israel, who had pleaded to go, and, being refused, had smuggled himself into the boat. There was then no way of getting rid of him, and, admiring his bold determination, Somers welcomed him on the ketch. There was a light blue haze on the water, and the night was murky as the "infernal" stole upon her way. She entered the harbor silently, while outside, in the offing, the Nautilus, the Argus, and the Vixen stood in as close as they dared. Presently, in the darkness, the Siren was

observed to flit past them. Stewart, in his anxiety for Somers, had implored Commodore Preble to let him be near the scene of action, and the commodore had consented.

The Siren ventured farther into the offing than the other vessels, and Stewart and his officers, like every officer and man on all of the ships, was intent upon the black shadow of the fire-ship, as she crept in among the rocks. She was soon discovered, in spite of the darkness, and a few grape-shot were thrown at her. Stewart was standing in the Siren's gangway, with one of his lieutenants, anxiously watching through his night-glass the progress of the Intrepid, when the officer cried, "Look! see the light!" A light, like a lantern, was seen to flash across the Intrepid's deck. The next moment a roar as if worlds were crashing together shook the castle and forts, and rocked the ships in the offing; a red glare hideously illumined the sea and sky; the masts and sails of the ketch rose up in the burning air for a moment, then fell into the fire-lit waves, and all was over. A frightful and unearthly silence and darkness succeeded. The brigs and schooners cruised about, their officers and men in anguish over the fate of their brave companions. The Constitution fired minute-guns all night, so that if any survived that awful explosion they might know they were not forgotten. When sunrise came, thirteen black-

ened bodies floated ashore at Tripoli. They were so disfigured that the officers could only be told from the men by the softness of their hands. Bainbridge and his officers were taken from their captivity to identify the remains of the thirteen brave souls who had given life itself to hasten the release of the Philadelphia's gallant company. Not the slightest damage was done to the Tripolitan ships or forts, or to the town itself.

The ten sailors were buried together near the beach, while the three officers were laid in the same grave on a plain a little southward of the castle. Whether Somers blew the ketch up, in his conception of his duty, or whether the powder was accidentally ignited, can never be ascertained. All that is known, however, is that he did his duty, as did every officer and man lost in that perilous attempt. Of each of them may be said as is written after the name of the little midshipman, Israel, in the records of the navy, "Died, with honor, in the service, September 4, 1804."

His country honored Somers by naming for him a beautiful little brig; but like him it was doomed to misfortune. One of the most terrible tragedies that ever occurred in the American navy took place upon the deck of the Somers, and it was afterward lost at sea, going down, as Somers did, in the darkness and silence of an unfathomed mystery.

Isaac Hull

ISAAC HULL.

The American navy has produced many men great in the handling of sailing-ships; but no more capable seaman ever trod the quarter-deck than Isaac Hull. In all of his achievements his faculty of handling his vessel, whether great or small, to the utmost possible advantage, was the most considerable factor in his success; and his tremendous popularity with seamen, who were always eager to ship with him, came from their conviction that in time of stress and danger they had a born sailor to look out for them.

Hull was the son of a Revolutionary officer, and was born at Derby, Massachusetts, in March, 1775, shortly before the affairs at Lexington and Concord. His father was taken prisoner and died on one of the Jersey prison ships, and Isaac was adopted by an uncle, General Hull. The means and station of the Hull family were such that a liberal education was within the lad's reach, and he was destined for a course at Yale College. But he early developed a passion for the sea; and his uncle, seeing the boy's determined bent, concluded to let him carry it out. The Continental navy had passed out of existence, and the

reorganization did not take place until 1797–98, so that a naval career was not open to him at the start. General Hull, however, did the next best thing possible for the boy, by sending him to sea in a fine ship owned by a friend of the Hull family. Isaac proved himself capable and industrious from the start, and by the time he reached his twenty-first birthday was in command of a small vessel. The desire to hold a commission in the regular navy possessed him, and in March, 1798, he got a fourth lieutenant's commission, which was dated on his twenty-third birthday.

His first cruise was made in the ship in which he was afterward to win such splendid renown, — the Constitution. She was then commanded by Captain Samuel Nicholson. He remained in her for more than two years, and thus became thoroughly familiar with the great frigate, — a knowledge he was eventually to put to good use. In 1800 she was the flagship of Commodore Talbot, in the West Indies, and Hull was her first lieutenant. Commodore Talbot and the captain of a British frigate on that station were friends, and the American and British captains would often discuss the sailing qualities of their respective frigates, the British ship being a good sailer as well as the Constitution. At last a sailing-match was agreed upon, the captains wagering a cask of wine on the result. The two frigates started with

a fresh breeze at sunrise, and the contest was to last until the sunset gun was fired. Hull sailed the Constitution, and his seamanship on that day of friendly rivalry was scarcely inferior to that which he displayed when Admiral Broke's squadron of five ships was hounding him on an August day, twelve years after. The Constitution could easily leg it at an eleven-knot gait, with a tolerable breeze, and was almost unapproachable on a wind ; but that day, under Hull's skilful handling, she outdid herself, and beat her opponent by several miles. Hull kept the crew on deck the livelong day, and the seamanlike manner in which he beat the English frigate, which was also remarkably well sailed, won the admiration even of his opponents. Hull was too great a seaman himself to underrate either British skill or pluck, and many years after it is told of him that, speaking with a very steady old boatswain, the man remarked, " The British, sir, are hard fellows on salt water."

" I know that, — they are a hard set of fellows, sure enough," was Hull's emphatic reply.

Hull saw no very brilliant service during the hostilities with France in 1799–1800, but he cut out a French letter-of-marque in the harbor of Port Platte, Hayti, in a very handsome manner. He armed a small vessel, the Sally, with men from the Constitution, ran into the harbor in broad daylight, landed a company of marines,

who spiked the guns of the fort and carried off the French letter-of-marque in fine style.

In 1802 Hull went to the Adams, of twenty-eight guns, as her first lieutenant. The Adams was one of the fastest frigates that ever floated, and Hull was the man to get the most out of her. She was sent to the Mediterranean at the beginning of the Tripolitan troubles, and in her patrol of the Straits of Gibraltar in all weathers, and her blockade of Tripoli in the dangerous winter season, her first lieutenant splendidly sustained the reputation he had brought from the Constitution with him, as one of the ablest seamen in the navy. He would carry more sail than any other lieutenant in the squadron would have carried, and would make sail when most ships scarcely showed a rag of canvas.

In 1803 he got his first command, the little schooner Enterprise, which he exchanged, after a short time, with Decatur, who brought out from America the Argus, a handsome sixteen-gun brig, lately off the stocks. In the Argus he took an active part in the bombardment of Tripoli, and manifested his usual steadiness and coolness. Commodore Preble, wishing to examine the harbor as closely as practicable during the bombardment, trusted to Hull's seamanship to get him the best view possible, and reconnoitred one night in the Argus. It came near being the end of the vessel and all on board, by one of those acci-

dents against which skill and courage avail nothing. A heavy shot struck the brig's bottom, and raked it for several feet, ripping the plank out as it went. Had it gone an inch deeper, the ship's bottom would have been out; but the gallant brig and her brave company were saved for great services to their country.

After the reduction of the Barbary powers Hull returned home, and in 1806 he reached the rank of post-captain. He was then thirty-one years old, short and stocky, but military in his bearing, prompt and decided in his manner, kind to his men, but a firm disciplinarian. He was singularly chivalrous to women, and treated the humblest woman with the highest respect.

In 1811 Hull got the Constitution, and with her, Lieutenant, afterward Commodore, Charles Morris, a lieutenant worthy of such a captain. In the celebrated chase of the Constitution the following year, scarcely less praise is due to Morris, then her first lieutenant, than to Hull.

The Constitution's first duty was to take a large amount of specie to Holland, in payment of interest on a debt due by the United States. From thence she proceeded to Portsmouth, England.

By that time it was known that war was imminent, and Hull kept his ship prepared for action at a moment's notice. It seemed at one time as if the Constitution would fire the first gun of the conflict in an English port. The Havana,

frigate, lay close to the Constitution, and one night a man from the American frigate jumped overboard and swam to the Havana, where he was taken aboard. Next morning Hull sent a boat with Morris, to ask the man's surrender. The British captain declined to give him up, saying that the man swore he was a British subject. As the British navy made laws for the navies of the world in those days, the Americans had to submit with a very bad grace. But compensation was at hand. A man from the Havana, seeing the turn of affairs, jumped overboard and swam to the Constitution. He was welcomed on board, one may be sure, and when the Havana's lieutenant sent after him, Hull coolly announced that the man said he was an American citizen, and therefore would not be given up. The British captain had to be satisfied with this answer. But there was some expectation that an attempt would be made to seize the man by force. Meanwhile Hull concluded to change his berth, the Havana and her consort being a little too near; so he picked up his anchor, and dropped down to leeward a mile or two. The Havana promptly followed him. Hull then thought it likely that he would be attacked before morning, and made his preparations accordingly. The ship was cleared for action, the cabin torn out of the way, the battle lanterns lighted, and the men sent to their quarters at the tap of the drum. Hull,

full of fire and determination, said to the men, —

"My lads, are you ready for a fight? I don't know but what this frigate is after us. Are you ready for her?"

The reply was a rousing American cheer. Even some men who were in irons joined in the cheering, and contrived to get a message to the captain asking to be released during the time of the expected fight, that they might do their duty. This was done, and amid the greatest enthusiasm the guns were cast loose. It was noted that the men took hold of the gun tackles as if they meant to jerk the guns through the ship's side. Lieutenant Morris, passing along the batteries, told the men that if the ship had to fight, it would be in their quarrel, and he hoped they would give a good account of themselves. The reply of these gallant tars was, "Let the quarterdeck look out for the colors, and we will look out for the guns."

Some hours having passed, with the Constitution plainly ready for a fight, without any demonstration from the British frigate, Hull determined to lift his anchor and sail for France. The men responded with a loud groan to the boatswain's call to man the capstan bars, and, sailor-like, were acutely disappointed that they got off without a chance to show what the ship could do.

Hull returned to the United States, and in

June, 1812, war was declared. The Constitution was at Annapolis, where she had been newly coppered, and where a sloop-of-war was also being fitted out. A report got about, among the Constitution's crew, that men were to be drafted from her to the sloop-of-war. This created great dissatisfaction. The men, nearly all native-born Americans, although new to the ship, were proud of her, and had a superstitious faith in her good fortune and were devoted to their captain. Their complaints became almost mutinous, when Hull appeared among them and assured them that not a man should be taken out of the ship. This pacified them, and on the 14th of July, 1812, they sailed for New York, to join Commodore Rodgers's squadron. About four o'clock on the morning of July 19th, the cry rang through the ship that the American squadron was sighted; but as day broke, it was found that the Constitution was almost surrounded by a British squadron under Admiral Broke, one of the finest seamen in the British navy. It consisted of the Africa, sixty-four; the frigates Shannon and Guerrière, of thirty-eight guns each (with the last the Constitution was to have it out, yardarm to yardarm, that day month); the light frigates Belvidera and Eolus; and two small vessels. By sunrise it fell almost calm, and it seemed as if the glorious frigate would have to lie where she was, to be eaten up by her enemies as soon as the wind rose.

But Hull and Morris were men of resource, and while fully prepared to go down fighting, if necessary, they knew a way of getting off even without a wind. All the spare hawsers in the ship were bent together, and to a kedge anchor which was put in a boat, sent ahead half a mile, and let go. The crew, at a signal, clapped on, and walked away with the ship. Before she lost the impetus gained by rousing on the one kedge, another one was carried ahead and let go; and so she progressed at the rate of about three knots an hour. At first the British were amazed to see her trotting off without a wind; but they soon found out what was going on, and put all the available boats in the squadron to towing the Shannon after the Constitution. The Shannon, however, could not make much headway, as Hull had mounted stern-chasers in the cabin, and fired on the British boats whenever they came within range.

The Shannon, however, was coming up on the starboard, while the other ships were towing, kedging, and sending their boats ahead with sweeps, to surround the gallant frigate. The Guerrière, too, was nearing her on the port quarter, and men less resourceful than Hull and his officers would have despaired of escape. But just then a light breeze struck the ship, the sails were trimmed, and the ship came by the wind beautifully. This brought the Guerrière nearly within gunshot, and she roared out her broadside;

but the Constitution's people continued hoisting up their boats with as much coolness and steadiness as if the cannonade were no more than bird-shot. For an hour the Constitution legged it at a lively rate; but about ten o'clock it fell calm, and the wearisome and tedious method of kedging was again resorted to. The British put nearly all their boats on the Shannon, but in spite of numbers the American frigate managed to keep just out of gunshot.

Every device known to seamanship was used to increase the distance between the frigate and her pursuers. Her sails were wet down fore and aft, several thousand gallons of water were pumped out of her, the boat's falls were kept in hand to run the boats up, and every cat's paw was taken advantage of with the finest possible seamanship. Yet so hopeless did her chances seem that Admiral Broke had a prize crew told off, to take her into Halifax! Neither Hull nor his officers or men contemplated for a moment giving up the frigate. Hull knew his ship; he had a remarkably capable set of officers, and his ship was so well manned by intelligent Americans that it was said in a very little while after they had enlisted the crew could have sailed and fought the ship without their officers.

About two o'clock the Belvidera got within range and began to throw her broadside; but Hull, after returning a few shot, devoted himself strictly

to keeping his ship away from her enemies. All day the British ships used every method that skill could devise to get at the Constitution, but were able neither to overhaul her nor to close with her. At eleven o'clock at night a breeze sprang up which lasted for an hour, when it died away. During that night neither the Constitution nor her pursuers kedged, the crews on all the ships being too exhausted; but no officer or man on the Constitution went below. The officers lay down at their stations, and the sailors slept at their guns, with their rammers and sponges at their sides.

With daylight came wind enough to keep the ships moving, and at sunrise the sight was singularly beautiful. The summer sea was faintly rippled by a long, soft swell, and the sun shone with unclouded splendor. The five pursuing ships, as well as the Constitution, were clouds of canvas, from rail to truck, and all six were on the same tack. Including the six men-of-war, eleven sail were in sight. The British squadron had been joined by the Nautilus, brig, and the rest were merchantmen. During the morning an American merchant ship was observed approaching. The Constitution, seeing the ship was unaware of her danger, hoisted an English ensign and fired a gun at her, — which induced her to run away from her supposed enemy.

All day the chase continued; but the Con-

stitution showed a clean pair of heels, and was slowly, though steadily, widening the distance between herself and her pursuers. In the afternoon a heavy squall with rain came up. The Constitution took in her sails, which induced the British ships to do the same. But as soon as she was hid by the curtain of falling rain, she made sail upon her stout masts, that carried her along at a rattling gait. In about an hour the weather cleared, when it was seen that the Belvidera, the nearest vessel, was far astern, the others were more distant still, the Africa being hull down. The chase was still kept up during the whole of that night, but at daylight next morning the British ships were almost out of sight, and about eight o'clock they hauled their wind and gave up the contest.

Not only had the noble frigate escaped from her enemies, but she had done so without losing a gun, an anchor, or a boat. She was ready at any moment of the chase to go into action, and the steadiness, coolness, and precision of her manœuvres were never surpassed. This chase is one of the glories of the American navy, — not merely because of the escape itself, but by reason of the seamanlike manner in which it was accomplished.

Shortly after, the Constitution ran the blockade and got into Boston, to hear the news that she had been captured!

The delight of the people at the escape of their

favorite frigate was unbounded. Hull was hailed as a hero; but with characteristic modesty he ascribed most of the credit of his escape to his officers and crew, both in his official report and a published card.

Having had an intimation, however, that it was in contemplation to give the ship to Bainbridge, in virtue of his superior rank, and without waiting for orders, which might be just what he did not want, Hull sailed eastward as soon as he had watered and victualled his ship. On the afternoon of the 19th of August, just one month to a day after he had first been chased by the Guerrière, he ran across her again, and both ships prepared to fight it out, with the greatest spirit imaginable.

Captain Dacres, of the Guerrière, and Hull were personal friends, as many of the American and British captains were in those days, and there was a standing bet of a hat between them on the result in case their two ships ever came to exchanging broadsides. The Guerrière was an extremely fine French-built frigate, carrying fifty guns, — the Constitution carried fifty-four and her broadside was much the heavier. In men, the Constitution had also the advantage of the British ship, but the damage inflicted by the Constitution was far in excess of her superiority in men and metal. On the Guerrière's great mainsail was inscribed in huge red letters,

"All who meet me have a care,
I am England's Guerrière."

The two ships were looking for each other, when on the 19th of August, about ten o'clock, a sail being reported off the port bow, a midshipman was sent aloft to try and make her out. All hands were hoping the stranger was the Guerrière, when Hull called out with animation, —

"What do you think she is?"

"She 's a great vessel, sir. Tremendous sails."

"Never mind," coolly replied Hull, turning to the boatswain. "Mr. Adams, call all hands. Make sail for her."

Before the boatswain's pipe was heard, the men came tumbling up on deck, even the sick turning out of their berths. Hull, in his official report of the battle, says: "From the smallest boy in the ship up to the oldest seaman, not a look of fear was seen. They went into action giving three cheers, and requesting to be laid alongside the enemy." When the call to quarters was heard through the ship, the men went to the guns dancing. Sail was crowded on, and soon it was seen that the stranger was the Guerrière. She had hauled her wind, and lay with her topsails aback, gallantly waiting for her enemy. Her officers and crew prepared to meet the Americans with the spirit of British seamen. There were ten Americans in the crew who came to Captain Dacres and told him they could not fight against

their own country. The captain magnanimously told them to go below, and assist in the cockpit with the wounded.

As soon as the Constitution got within range, the Guerrière let fly her batteries, firing the starboard guns, then wearing and giving the Constitution her port guns. The Constitution came on, yawing at intervals to prevent being raked, and occasionally firing one of her bow guns. Three times Lieutenant Morris asked permission to fire a broadside, and each time Hull answered, "Not yet." At last, when within fifty yards of the Guerrière, the moment had come. Hull spoke a few stirring words to his people.

"Men!" he said, "now do your duty. Your officers cannot have entire command over you now. Each man must do all in his power for his country. No firing at random. Let every man look well to his aim. Sailing-master, lay her alongside."

The Constitution came up into the wind in gallant style, and as she fell off a little, the Guerrière, an antagonist worthy of the great frigate, ranged alongside. The Constitution let fly every gun in her starboard batteries at short range, and the shock was like an earthquake. Every timber in the frigate trembled like a leaf. When the smoke cleared away, it was seen that this terrific broadside had made destruction on the British ship. Her mizzen-mast had gone by the board, her mainyard had been shot from the slings,

and a momentary confusion reigned on her decks. The effect of their first broadside was so encouraging to the Americans that before firing another gun they gave three thundering cheers. The English officers spoke afterward of the extra ordinary enthusiasm of the Americans, which was a part of the fury of their attack.

When the cheers had subsided, Hull called out, "My lads, you have made a brig of that craft;" to which the sailors shouted back, "We'll make a sloop of her soon, sir;" and in a little while the foremast went by the board. The Guerrière then swung round, and, being almost unmanageable, got into a terrible position for raking. Her officers and men fought with undiminished valor, and when the ensign was shot away, another one was nailed to the stump of the mizzen-mast. On the Constitution the halyards were shot away, and the flag became entangled in the splinters of a shattered yard. A sailor sprang aloft and nailed it to the mast, and both ships continued the action without thought of surrender.

The Guerrière, however, was plainly getting the worst of it. Most of her fire was directed to the masts and spars of the Constitution, while several shot that struck the frigate's hull rebounded into the water. At this the sailors cheered.

"Huzza!" they cried. "Her sides are made of iron! Huzza for Old 'Ironsides'!"

Then some one on the Constitution, pointing to the captain, cried, —

"Hull her, men! Hull her!"

The sailors, catching the pun, roared out, —

"Hull her! Hull her! Yes, we 'll hull her!"

Hull, who had grown very stout, and was short withal, was standing on an ammunition box, while shot flew thick and fast around him. Leaning over to give an order, his knee breeches, which were very tight, burst from knee to hip. The men shouted with laughter; but it was no time to repair such damages, and Hull finished the battle with his trousers hanging in rags.

It was not to last long. The mainmast soon followed the other masts, and in thirty minutes from the time the Constitution's first broadside had been fired, the Guerrière lay, a helpless hulk, rolling in the trough of the sea, that washed into her shattered main-deck ports.

Her masts and spars having gone by the board, she swung round, so that she lay perfectly helpless, while every gun in the Constitution raked her. The men could see the whites of each other's eyes, and the gleam of the teeth as they fought. Captain Dacres had been badly wounded, while standing in the hammock nettings cheering his men on, a vast number of officers and men killed and wounded, and the Guerrière's decks ran with blood. But even in these dreadful circumstances not a man or boy on the British ship faltered; and

when it was plain to every eye that resistance was over for the proud Guerrière, one of her powder boys was heard to shout to another confidently, —

"Work away there! Huzza! She'll soon be ours!"

Her captain saw that it was time to stop the useless slaughter, and a gun was fired to leeward, which signified surrender. But her men refused to haul down the jack they had nailed to the stump of the mizzen-mast, and not until Captain Dacres stepped into the Constitution's boat did the brave men and boys of the Guerrière acknowledge themselves beaten. It was, indeed, an idea almost impossible for them to grasp, that a crack British frigate should have been whipped in fair fight by an American; but it is easily understood when it is remembered that they were men of the same stock, — for the Constitution was wholly manned by native-born Americans, who came justly by that genius for fighting at sea which is the common heritage of the Anglo-Saxon race.

As Captain Dacres came over the side of the Constitution, Hull met him with the cordiality of a friend and shipmate instead of the air of a conqueror. He gave the British captain a hand, saying, with the greatest friendliness, —

"Dacres, I see you are hurt. Let me help you."

As soon as Captain Dacres reached the Constitution's deck, he attempted to hand his sword to Hull, who said, —

"No, no, I cannot take the sword of a man who knows so well how to use it; but — I'll thank you for that hat!"

The business of transferring the prisoners then began. It was seen at once there was no hope of saving the Guerrière, and it was determined to remove everything of value and then blow her up. The damages to the Constitution were repaired in an hour. She had lost seven men killed and seven wounded. The Guerrière had lost seventy-nine in killed and wounded.

The Constitution lay by the Guerrière all night, and the Americans worked like Trojans to save the belongings of the prisoners. Hull asked Captain Dacres if everything of value had been sent him out of the Guerrière's cabin. Captain Dacres replied that a Bible, his wife's gift, had been left behind. Hull immediately sent a boat after it. Captain Dacres, in his report to the Admiralty, said: "I feel it my duty to state that the conduct of Captain Hull and his officers to our men has been that of a brave enemy, the greatest care being taken to prevent our men losing the smallest trifle, and the greatest attention being paid to the wounded."

After working all night the morning of the 20th of August saw the brave but unfortunate Guerrière made ready for her ocean grave. A slow match was applied to her magazine, and the Constitution bore away. About three miles

off she hove to, while her officers and men, together with those of the doomed frigate, waited breathlessly for the explosion. As the fire gained headway, a dense volume of smoke formed over her. Some of her guns had been left shotted, and as the fire reached them, they began to go off, their sullen boom over the sea sounding like the death-knell of the gallant ship. Presently the flames reached the magazine. Streams of light, and a roar that seemed to shake the deep, followed; a mass of wreckage flew skyward; the Guerrière was no more.

There was great uneasiness felt on board the Constitution in regard to the large number of prisoners she carried. There were not enough handcuffs in the ship for the whole British crew, and the Americans felt a manly unwillingness to handcuff any of the men who had fought them so bravely. But it was noted that from the start the prisoners and their captors behaved well, the American and British sailors sitting around the fok'sle together, spinning yarns, exchanging tobacco, and chumming quite amicably.

Hull made for Boston, and on his arrival there was greeted with the wildest enthusiasm. The people were beside themselves with joy. Before this a British ship had been deemed invincible, and the knowledge that one of these great ships, with a captain and crew worthy of her, had struck to an American captain who had never before

handled a frigate in action, was gratifying to the national pride. Hull, to his great discomfiture, was seized, as he stepped upon the dock, and carried on the shoulders of his admirers to his destination. A grand banquet was given to him and his officers in Faneuil Hall. Congress had a medal struck in his honor, and gave swords to the officers and a handsome sum in prize money to the crew. So great was Hull's popularity that the commissioners of the navy would not have taken the ship away from him, had he asked to retain her, but with true magnanimity he gave her up to Bainbridge. Hull knew that Bainbridge was justly entitled to her, and he was not the man to withhold anything from a brother in arms. Bainbridge therefore took her, and went out and captured the Java.[1]

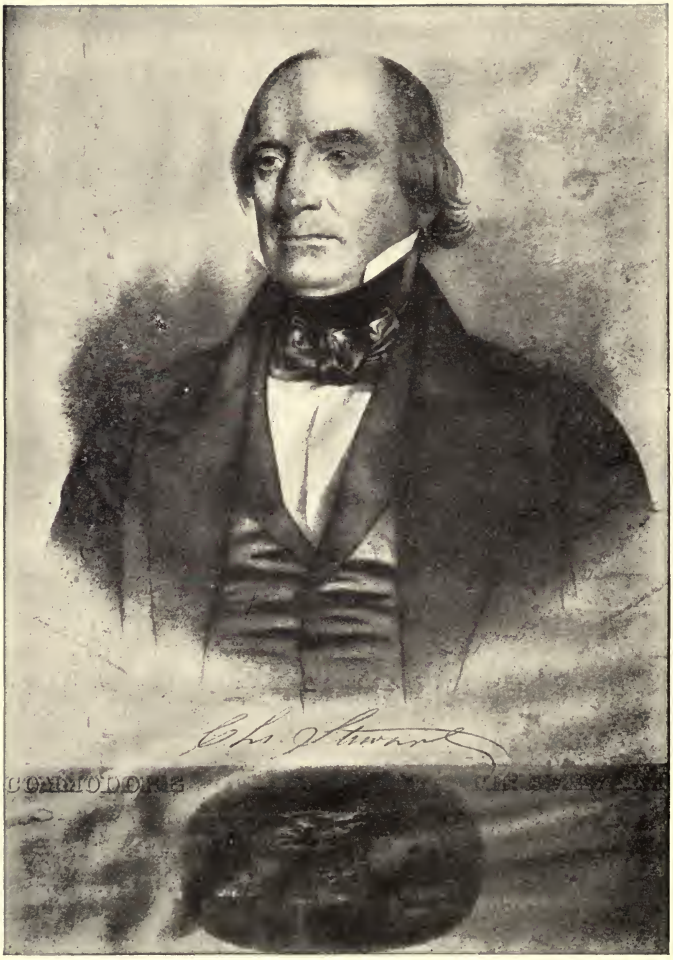
Hull was actively, though not brilliantly, employed during the rest of the war, but did not get afloat again, as there were more captains than frigates. In 1813 he married a beautiful girl, the daughter of a clergyman. She had laughed at his pretensions when he was only a lieutenant; but after his great cruise she said, when she knew it would be repeated to Hull, "How delightful it must be to be the wife of a hero!" He took the hint, and soon after they were married.

Hull's subsequent career was one of honor and usefulness. He was a great hater of idleness, and

[1] See the biography of Bainbridge.

often said, "Idleness will soon bring any man to ruin." He had fine commands, both ashore and afloat, and hoisted his broad pennant over several splendid squadrons. In 1836 he commanded the Mediterranean station. At Gibraltar he found his old friend Dacres, then an admiral, also in command of a squadron. The two met with delight. Admiral Dacres showed Commodore Hull the greatest attention, and at a splendid dinner given in his honor on the British flagship the admiral told Mrs. Hull, who was present, the story of the saving of his wife's Bible. Later, both of them having been detached from their squadrons, they were in Rome for a winter together, and were inseparable. Admiral Dacres was a remarkably tall, thin man, while Commodore Hull was somewhat the size and shape of a hogshead; and the wags had infinite amusement over the queer figures of these two heroic men.

On Commodore Hull's retirement he made his home in Philadelphia. He always wore his uniform, and as he walked the streets every hat was doffed to him, and the salute was courteously returned. The end came in February, 1843. His last words were, "I strike my flag," — words that he had never before had occasion to utter. He was a devout Christian, and during his whole life he honestly lived up to the requirements of a just and pious manhood.



Charles Stewart

CHARLES STEWART.

In the splendid galaxy of naval officers of the early part of the century each one seems to have gained some special distinction, equally brilliant, but differing entirely from any other. Thus, as Hull made the most remarkable escape on record, and Decatur succeeded in the most daring enterprise, so Stewart may be credited with the most superb seamanship in the one great fight that fell to his lot, for with one ship, the glorious Constitution, he fought two vessels at the same time, raking them repeatedly, without once being raked himself, and in the end forcing the surrender of both his antagonists.

Charles Stewart was born in Philadelphia in 1778, and entered the merchant service at thirteen years of age. At twenty he had risen to the command of a fine vessel in the India trade, but on the reorganization of the navy in 1798 he was given a naval commission. His rise in the navy was rapid, as he was an accomplished seaman when he joined it. After serving for a short time as a midshipman, he was made the junior lieutenant on the United States, frigate, when she was commissioned at the beginning of hostili-

ties with France. With him on this cruise were Decatur and Somers; and, as Fenimore Cooper aptly says, the noble frigate turned out to be a nursery of heroes.

Stewart began the cruise as fourth, and ended it as first, lieutenant. He was of commanding figure and of pleasing address, and his capacity was such that from the first he was thought likely to distinguish himself.

When the United States was laid up in ordinary, Stewart was given the command of a small schooner, the Experiment. In this little vessel he showed much spirit and enterprise, making many captures, and fighting whenever he had a chance.

Stewart was, like Decatur, of an impetuous and even domineering disposition, and made everybody under him "walk Spanish," as the sailors said. But he himself knew how to obey promptly. Once, having received a peremptory order from his superior officer to report with his ship immediately, Stewart sailed, towing his mainmast after him, as he had not time to have it fitted and did not choose to wait.

In 1803 he was sent to the Mediterranean with the Siren, a beautiful little cruiser, as a part of Commodore Preble's squadron destined to reduce Tripoli. Stewart was the senior among the commodore's "schoolboy captains," and second in command to Commodore Preble himself.

Although he had no opportunity of performing

deeds like Decatur's in the Tripolitan war, his general good conduct was highly praised, and the Siren was brilliantly engaged in all the glorious actions of that famous time. At the beginning of the war of 1812 Stewart was given the command of the Constellation, frigate, which shared with the Constitution the reputation of being a lucky ship, — lucky in meeting and whipping her enemies when the force was anything like equal, and lucky in running away when they were too many for her. Stewart took command of this noble ship at Annapolis in 1813. He was ordered to Norfolk, and took the ship to Hampton Roads. He arrived and anchored one night, and next morning at daylight there were five British men-of-war in sight of him. The Constellation endeavored to get out of the way, and the British ships chased her, but, the wind failing, both the pursuers and the pursued were becalmed. Stewart, though, remembering the Constitution's escape by kedging from a British squadron, concluded it would never do that the Constellation should not succeed equally as well; so, putting out his boats, the frigate was kedged up toward Norfolk, until the tide fell, and she took the ground at Seawell's Point, not far from the present Fort Monroe. The mud was soft, the ship's bottom was hard, and the tide would rise; so Stewart felt no alarm about her. The British squadron were also waiting for

the tide, but they did not think that Stewart would attempt to get his ship up the narrow and tortuous channel to Norfolk.

They did not know Stewart, though. As soon as the darkness of the winter night came, and the tide began to lift the ship out of the mud, he sent pilots ahead to buoy the channel with lights. The ship, helped somewhat by the wind, but towed by the boats, would go a mile or two up to the nearest buoy, when that light would be put out, and she would be headed for the next one. So quietly was this done that the British never suspected what was going on. But when daylight came there was no Constellation to be seen; she was safe in the Elizabeth River.

The British determined to blockade her there, and succeeded in doing so; but although they made several desperate attempts to carry her by boarding, they never succeeded. Stewart had her so well guarded with boats, and the boats with a circle of booms, while the ship was protected with boarding netting, her guns kept double-shotted, and her officers and crew always on the alert, that her enemies themselves were forced to admire the care taken of her. It was the joke among the British officers that Stewart must be a Scotchman, he was so wary and so watchful with his ship; and the British Admiral is said to have remarked: "If that had been a French ship, we would have had her long ago."

Having satisfied himself that although the Constellation could not be taken, yet it was unlikely that she would get out during the war, Stewart applied for and got the Constitution. This was in 1814. The Constitution had then made her celebrated escape from Admiral Broke's squadron, and had destroyed the Guerrière and the Java, — for when "Old Ironsides" got through with an enemy, he was generally past saving. It may be imagined with what splendid hopes Stewart took the great ship after she had been refitted at Boston. He got out, although seven British ships blockaded Boston, and sailed to the West Indies. He made a few prizes, and took a small British cruiser; but this was not enough for the Constitution to do. Stewart's disappointment with his cruise was great, and it almost seemed as if the ship were no longer to be a favorite of fortune, until she was chased by two frigates, the Junon and the Tenedos, off the Massachusetts coast. Stewart had a good pilot aboard, and he made for Marblehead under a spanking breeze, with the two British frigates legging it briskly after him. The Constitution drew about twenty-two feet of water, and Stewart could not conceal his anxiety as the pilot carried her along the dangerous coast, and it seemed as if any moment she might be put on the rocks. The pilot, though, a cool-headed, steady fellow, knew his business, and was

nettled at Stewart's evident uneasiness. The British ships, not knowing the coast, declined to follow, and were falling slightly astern; but it looked as if the Constitution would only escape one danger to be destroyed by another. Presently Stewart asked the pilot for the hundredth time, —

"How many feet of water has she under her keel now, pilot?"

"Two," answered the pilot; when, seeing Stewart's countenance turn pale with apprehension, he added nonchalantly: "And afore long she won't have but one!"

The effect of this news upon the captain of a war-ship may be imagined; but in a moment or two the ship slipped into deep water, and, carrying sail hard, got into Marblehead safe and sound, while cheering multitudes flocked to the shore to welcome her.

In a few days Stewart succeeded in slipping into Boston again, — the sixth time in the course of the war that the ship had eluded the British blockade. Stewart took up his berth in the upper harbor, and as he was known to be a fighting captain with a fighting ship, the State and city authorities concluded that they would rather have him a little farther off. Accordingly they asked him to take his ship down into the lower harbor, as, if the British blockading fleet attacked him where he was, the cannonade would do great dam-

age to the town. Stewart's reply to this request was characteristic. He coolly informed them that he should stay where he was, but it would make very little difference to them where he lay, as, "if attacked, I shall make such a defence as will endanger the town." He recommended them to build some additional batteries to defend the town. The authorities had to be satisfied with this reply; but they took Stewart's advice, and increased their batteries so that they were better prepared than before to meet a bombardment, should the British fleet treat them to one.

On the 17th of December, 1814, Stewart again slipped past the blockading fleet, making the seventh time the Constitution had done this, and sailed on his last and greatest cruise. He had lately been married, and it is said that he asked his wife what he should bring home to her. She replied, "A British frigate." Stewart replied, "I will bring you two of them." He kept his promise.

Stewart was soon on the broad ocean. Nothing of note happened until February, when one morning, off the coast of Portugal, Stewart suddenly and from no reason he was able to give, except an unaccountable impulse to proceed to a certain spot in the Atlantic, changed the ship's course and ran off sixty miles to the southwest. At two o'clock in the afternoon of the 20th of February, 1815, about sixty leagues southwest of

the Madeira islands, a small frigate, the Cyane, was sighted, and a little later a large sloop-of-war, the Levant. The Constitution immediately gave chase, although it was thought that one of the ships was much heavier than she really was, as she had double gun-streaks and false ports painted amidships, which the Americans, in chasing, took for real guns and ports.

It soon became plain that the two ships were bent on fighting, but they manœuvred in a very masterly manner for several hours, in order to get together before trying conclusions with the great frigate. At five minutes past six o'clock they hove to and hoisted their ensigns, and the Constitution replied by showing her colors. The three ships were arranged like the points of an equilateral triangle, — a very advantageous position for the two attacking ships, but one which was turned by the superb seamanship of Stewart to his own profit by what is commonly esteemed to have been the finest manœuvring ever known of an American ship in action. Stewart fought his port and starboard batteries alternately, giving one of his antagonists a terrible broadside, then wearing, and letting fly at the other, raking them repeatedly, and handling his ship in such a manner that neither the Levant nor the Cyane ever got in a single raking broadside.

Soon after the action began, a full moon arose in splendor, and by its radiance the battle went

on stoutly. There was a good working breeze, and the British captains handled their ships admirably, but "Old Ironsides" appeared to be playing with them. She answered her helm beautifully, and always presented her broadside to the ship that attempted to approach her. Soon both the British ships were suffering dreadfully, and the leading ship, the sloop-of-war Levant, was forced to wear under a raking broadside from the Constitution, and ran off to leeward, unable to stand the fire. Having disposed of her, the Constitution now turned her attention to the other ship, the light frigate Cyane, and another raking broadside caused her to strike her colors. Stewart at once sent Lieutenant Ballard and a prize crew aboard of her, and after repairing the slight damages his ship had sustained, set off to look for the Levant. She too had repaired damages, and, although free to escape, was gallantly returning to meet her mighty antagonist again. For a time the little Levant bravely withstood the heavy frigate's fire, but at last was forced to run away, the Constitution pursuing her. The two ships were so close that those in the Constitution could hear the planks ripping on the Levant as the heavy shot tore through her. At ten o'clock she was overhauled, and forced to strike also, and the Constitution had gained the most brilliant and seamanlike of all her victories.

The Constitution lost in this fight three men killed and twelve wounded. The other two ships lost, altogether, nineteen killed and forty-two wounded.

The Constitution, with her two prizes, made sail for Porto Praya, where they arrived on the 10th of March. Next day, about twelve o'clock, while the captured officers of the Cyane and Levant were on the quarter-deck, the first lieutenant, happening to pass along, heard a little midshipman who had been taken on the Cyane utter an exclamation to Captain Falcon, late of the Cyane, —

"Oh, Captain Falcon," he cried, "look at the large ship in the offing!"

"Hold your tongue, you little rascal!" answered Captain Falcon, in a low voice.

The American lieutenant looked up and saw, on the top of a fog bank that lay on the water, the sails of a large ship. Indistinctly as she was seen, the squareness and smartness of her rig induced the lieutenant to think her a man-of-war. Instantly he went below and told the captain. Stewart, who was shaving, without stopping in his occupation, directed him to call the men to quarters, and make ready to go out and attack the advancing ship. The lieutenant went on deck, gave the order, and it was promptly obeyed. The men were not surprised, because, as they explained, a dog belonging to the ship

had been drowned that day, and they knew they would have to fight or run within twenty-four hours. Then the lieutenant noticed that two more ships had appeared above the fog-bank, with the first one. He ran below to tell this to Stewart, who was wiping his face and getting into his uniform at the same time.

"Cut the cables," he said, "and signal the prizes to do the same and follow us out."

In another minute he was on deck, and the cables were cut, leaving the anchors at the bottom, and sail was being made with perfect order and marvellous rapidity. In fourteen minutes from the time the first ship had been seen, and ten minutes from the time the Constitution's cable had been cut, the frigate was standing out of the roads under a cloud of canvas, ready to fight or run, as occasion might require.

The trade winds were blowing, and the Constitution, with her two prizes, passed within gunshot of the three strangers. Some of the English prisoners who had been landed, manned a battery on shore and opened fire on the Americans. This and other circumstances revealed to the British squadron that the three ships making out to sea were American men-of-war, and they promptly tacked and followed.

The British ships were the Acasta, of forty guns, a very fast ship; the Leander, of fifty guns; and the Newcastle, of fifty guns, all be-

longing to Admiral Sir George Collier's fleet. The British officers, prisoners on the Constitution, became jubilant as the British ships gained on the Constitution with her two prizes, and promised the Americans that "Kerr in the Acasta" would soon overhaul the Americans. One of the British captains, standing in the stern gallery, called out as the Acasta neared the Constitution, "Captain Kerr, I envy you your glory this day!"

Stewart, with his men at quarters and every rag of canvas set that would draw, was edging off, but prepared to fight the three heavy frigates with the Constitution and the two smaller ships if obliged to. He signalled the Cyane and the Levant to take different courses, so that the British squadron might divide in pursuit. This was done, and to the amazement of the Americans and the painful chagrin of the British prisoners the Acasta suddenly went about in pursuit of the Levant, which, by a singular mistake, was supposed to be a heavy American frigate; the other two ships followed, while the Constitution was trotting off at an eleven-knot gait.

The Levant put back to Porto Praya, which was a neutral port; but the three frigates, after chasing her in, opened fire on her, and her commander, Lieutenant Ballard, of the Constitution, hauled down his flag. He had his revenge,

though. When the British prize-master came on board to take possession of the Levant, he said, "This is, I presume, the American man-of-war Peacock." "You are mistaken, sir," replied Ballard coolly; "this is the Levant, late of his Britannic Majesty's navy, and prize to the United States ship Constitution."

The commander of the British squadron was censured at home for his mistake in leaving the Constitution that he might go in pursuit of the smaller ship; and the affair on the part of the British was thought to have been bungled to the last degree.

Stewart carried the grand old ship into New York the middle of May, and then learned that peace had been made many months before.

He was received with acclamations. The people by that time had come to believe the ship invincible. Besides her glorious career before Tripoli, she had made two extraordinary escapes from British squadrons. She had run the blockade seven times through large British fleets. She had captured two heavy frigates, one light frigate, a large sloop-of-war, and many merchant-ships, and had made more than eleven hundred prisoners. Her fire had always been fearfully destructive, while she had never had any great slaughter on her decks, nine being the largest number killed in any single engagement. She had never lost her commanding officer, either by

wounds or death, had never lost a mast, and had never taken the ground. This record is not one of chance. She was, first, one of the best built frigates in the world; and, second, she was officered and manned in a surprisingly good manner. Her crews were generally made up wholly of American seamen, and her four great commanders during her warlike career — Preble, Hull, Bainbridge, and Stewart — would have given a good account of any ships they might have commanded.

Congress rewarded Stewart by a gold medal and a resolution of thanks. His officers received silver medals, and there was the usual distribution of prize-money among the officers and crew.

Stewart had a long and distinguished career in the navy, rising in 1859 to be senior officer; but his fighting days were his early days. He commanded the Franklin in 1817, a splendid line-of-battle ship, and took her to Europe under his broad pennant as Commodore. She was visited by the Emperor of Austria, and many royal persons, besides officers of high rank in foreign navies, all of whom were struck with admiration at her beauty, force, and the fine crew she carried. Stewart was retired in 1861, and spent his last days at his country-place, "Old Ironsides," in New Jersey. Among the souvenirs of his great fight was a rude iron hilt to his full-dress sword,

a superb Toledo blade. The gold hilt had been shot away in his great fight, and the ship's armorer had made an iron one, which Stewart afterward wore.

He died in 1869, after having been borne on the navy list for seventy-one years, and he was the last survivor of the great captains of 1812–15.

OLIVER HAZARD PERRY.

The victory won by Perry on Lake Erie, September 10, 1813, has ever been one of great popular renown. It was won in the sight and knowledge of the American people; it was the first success the American navy ever won in squadron; the consequences were important; and the fact that the battle was won on the Canadian line, where the American army had met with reverses, was gratifying to the national vanity.

Perry's youth — he was barely eight-and-twenty — was a captivating element in his success, and as the victory was due in a great measure to his personal intrepidity, he was justly admired for it. He cannot be classed with those American commanders, like Paul Jones, Preble, Decatur, and Hull, who, either in meeting danger or escaping from it, seemed able to compass the impossible; but he was a man of good talents, of admirable coolness and courage, and prone to seek active duty and to do it.

Perry was born in Rhode Island in 1785. His father was a captain in the infant navy of the country, as it was reorganized at the time of the French aggressions. Captain Perry's first duty

Oliver H. Perry

was to supervise the building of a vessel of war at Warren, Rhode Island, some distance from his home. He found it necessary to remove to Warren, and took with him Mrs. Perry, leaving the home-place in charge of Oliver, then a boy of thirteen. He was, even then, a boy of so much steadiness and integrity that he was found quite equal to this task. The fever for the sea, though, seems to have seized him about that time, and in 1799, his father having command of a small frigate, the General Greene, Oliver was given a midshipman's commission, and joined his father's ship. Captain Perry was an officer of spirit and enterprise, and Oliver saw some real, if not warlike, service in the General Greene.

His next cruise was in the Adams, frigate, which was sent out in 1802 to join Commodore Morris's squadron at Gibraltar. The orders of the squadron were to watch the ships of the Barbary powers, and to prevent as far as possible their aggressions upon American commerce. This was hard and thankless work, and most of the younger officers who made the Mediterranean cruise in 1802–3 considered themselves as peculiarly unfortunate, as they were generally ordered to return to the United States just at the time that the active hostilities began, in which their successors reaped so much glory. Perry was one of those who made the uneventful cruise of 1802. He enjoyed great advantages, though, in sailing

on a ship of which Isaac Hull, afterward the celebrated commodore, was first lieutenant. Hull's admirable seamanship in navigating the narrow straits of Gibraltar in all weathers, and the blockading of Tripoli for eight months during an inclement season, upon a dangerous coast, without pilots and with insufficient charts, was a subject of general commendation from the officers of the squadron. Perry improved his opportunities so well that he was given an appointment as acting lieutenant the day he was seventeen years old. It is believed that this is the most rapid instance of promotion in the American navy.

Perry returned home in the Adams in the autumn of 1803. The next summer it was known that a determined attempt would be made by Preble's squadron to reduce the Barbary powers, and Perry was extremely anxious to be on the scene of action. He found himself ordered to the Constellation, in the squadron under Commodore Barron which was sent out to assist Preble; but the Constellation and the President, forty-four guns, did not reach Tripoli until Preble had practically completed the work. Perry remained in the Constellation several months; but as she was too large to be of much service on that coast, Perry thought himself fortunate to be ordered to the schooner Nautilus, of fourteen guns, as first lieutenant. This was

his first duty in that responsible capacity, and he acquitted himself well, although only twenty years old. He had a beautiful and penetrating voice, and this, in addition to his other qualifications, made him a brilliant deck officer.

He took part in the operations off Derne, and was highly commended for his conduct. In the autumn of 1806 he returned home, and served at home stations until 1809, when he got his first command. This was a smart little schooner, the Revenge, of fourteen guns.

At that time the occurrences which led to the war of 1812–15 were taking place, and Perry soon had a chance to show his determination to maintain the dignity of the flag he flew. An American vessel had been run away with by the English captain who commanded her and who had hoisted British colors over her. Perry determined to take possession of her, although two small British cruisers lay near her. This he did, supported by three gunboats. The British cruisers, appreciating the justice of his conduct, did not interfere, although Perry had no means of knowing whether they would or not and took all the chances. As he was carrying the vessel off, he was met by a British sloop-of-war, and her captain sent a boat, with a request that Perry should come aboard. This Perry flatly refused, and, determined that his ship should not be caught unprepared as the Leopard caught the Chesa-

peake in 1807,[1] he sent his men to quarters, and made every preparation to resist; but the British ship passed on, and no collision occurred. In January, 1811, Perry had the misfortune to lose the Revenge by shipwreck off Watch Hill, in Rhode Island; but the court of inquiry which investigated it acquitted him of blame, and praised his conduct at the time of the accident.

When war was declared with Great Britain, Perry was in command of a division of gunboats at Newport; but finding there was little chance of seeing active service in that duty, he asked to be sent to the lakes, where Commodore Chauncey was preparing to dispute the possession of those great inland seas with the British.

In the spring of 1813 Perry arrived at Lake Erie, and entered upon his duties. The small fleet to oppose the British had to be constructed in the wilderness, on the shores of the lake; and men and material had to be transported at great labor and cost from the seaboard.

Perry showed the utmost skill, energy, and vigilance in his arduous work, and built and equipped his little squadron in a manner most creditable to himself and his subordinates.

The land forces, operating together with the seamen and marines, got command of the Niagara River; but a little British squadron guarded the mouth of the river, at which there was a bar

[1] See the biography of James Lawrence.

which it was thought unlikely the Americans could pass and so get into the lake itself. Perry, however, watched his chance, and on a Sunday afternoon in August, 1813, to his surprise, he found the British squadron had disappeared. It was said that the British commander, Barclay, had gone over to the Canadian side to attend a dinner, thinking the Americans could not possibly get over the bar before his return. But Perry and his officers and men went to work, and by the most arduous labor they got all the vessels into the lake before Captain Barclay returned. Once in the lake, the Americans were much stronger than the British, and Perry determined to go in search of the enemy. He had much sickness on his little squadron, and was ill himself, so that it was not until early in September that he was prepared to fight. Meanwhile the British, although having only six vessels to oppose to Perry's nine, undauntedly sought the conflict, and on the morning of the 10th of September, while Perry was in Put-in-Bay, he saw the little British squadron standing in the offing. Perry had two brigs, the Lawrence, — his own flagship, named for the brave Lawrence, — and the Niagara, each of which carried twenty guns; and he had five smaller vessels. Captain Barclay had the Detroit, — his flagship, of nineteen guns, — the Queen Charlotte, of seventeen guns, and four smaller vessels.

The wind was light and variable, so that the American vessels came out slowly; but the little British squadron waited with their topsails to the mast, until a quarter to twelve, when the first shot was fired by the Detroit. In a very little while the action became general, each American and British vessel bravely doing its best to get alongside its enemy. It was the effort of the gallant commanders of the American and British squadrons to fight flagship to flagship; and in doing this, Perry, in the Lawrence, drew ahead of his column, and concentrated upon his ship the fire from the Detroit and two other vessels. The British fought their batteries with unusual skill, and the result soon was that a dreadful slaughter took place on the Lawrence's decks, her guns were silenced, and she was so much cut up that she was totally unmanageable. But Perry, with indomitable courage, continued the fight. He himself, with the help of the purser and the chaplain, fired the last gun available on the Lawrence. Her consort, the Niagara, approached about this time, the wind sprang up, and Perry, seeing that the battle was passing ahead of him, determined to abandon his own unfortunate ship and make for the Niagara. He ordered a boat lowered, and, taking with him his brother, a little midshipman of thirteen years old, he was rapidly pulled to the Niagara. Once on board of her, he bore up, and soon got her into a position to rake both

the Detroit and the Queen Charlotte with fearful effect. These two vessels, after an heroic defence, were compelled to strike, while the seven smaller American gunboats soon overpowered the four British ones. The Detroit, however, before striking had forced the Lawrence to haul down her colors; and the fight, as all the others during this war, was as creditable to British as to American valor.

The first news of the victory was in Perry's celebrated despatch: "We have met the enemy, and they are ours." The news from the Canadian border had not always been gratifying, and on that account the American people were the more delighted at this success. Perry was given a gold medal and promoted to be a post-captain; for although he had been called commodore by courtesy, such was not his real rank at the time.

Perry had no further opportunity of distinguishing himself before peace was declared, in January, 1815. He obtained afterward some of the best commands in the navy, and in March, 1819, he became a commodore in fact, by being given the command of a squadron in South America destined to protect American trade in those quarters. He hoisted his broad pennant on the John Adams, and sailed in June. He reached the mouth of the Orinoco River in August, and, although it was in the midst of the sickly season,

he determined to go up the river to Angostura. He shifted his flag to the Nonesuch, schooner, and sent the frigate to Trinidad.

After reaching Angostura he remained twenty days. Yellow fever was raging, and Perry seems to have been singularly indifferent to this fact. Fever broke out on the schooner, and it was then determined to get back to the sea as soon as possible. As they dropped down the river with the powerful current two days after leaving Angostura, Perry got into his gig, and amused himself shooting wildfowl on the banks. He was exposed to the sun, and that night, after going aboard the schooner, which was anchored on the bar at the mouth of the river, the weather grew bad, with a heavy sea, which washed over the side and leaked down into Perry's cabin, drenching him. Next morning he was very ill.

From the first he felt that he should not recover, and, although calmly preparing for death, spoke often of his young wife and little children at home. He was very anxious to live until the schooner could reach Trinidad and he could, at least, die upon his ship. At last, on the 23d of August, the Nonesuch reached Port Spain, Trinidad, where the John Adams was at anchor. A boat put off at once from the frigate carrying the first lieutenant and other officers, in response to the signal from the schooner. They found Perry in the agonies of death on the floor of

the little cabin. He survived long enough to show satisfaction at seeing them, and asked feebly about the ship; but in a little while the anxious watchers on the frigate saw the flag on the Nonesuch slowly half-masted, — Perry was no more.

He was buried at Trinidad with full military honors. Some years afterward a ship of war was sent by the government to bring back his remains to his native country. He sleeps at Newport, Rhode Island, near the spot where he was born; and the reputation he left behind him is that of a gallant, capable, and devoted officer.

THOMAS MACDONOUGH.

Thomas Macdonough may be called the Young Commodore; for he was an acting commodore at the age of thirty-one, when the modern naval officer is still in subordinate grades of rank. It is truly astonishing what wonders were accomplished by men in their first manhood in the early days of the American navy, and Macdonough had seen as much service as most veterans before his twenty-first birthday. He was a son of a Revolutionary officer, and was born in Delaware in 1783. His diffident and retiring disposition was early marked. Fenimore Cooper speaks of him in his midshipman days as "the modest but lion-hearted Macdonough." The words describe him admirably; for this quiet, silent midshipman was always to be found leading the forlorn hope, — "the lost children," as the French expressively call it.

Indeed, Macdonough's character as an officer and a man is as nearly perfect as can be imagined; and when his great talents are considered, he may well be held as a type of what the American naval officer should be. He entered the navy in 1800, when he was seventeen, which was

THOMAS MACDONOUGH

rather old for a midshipman in those days. He had enjoyed a good education for his years, and remained a close student all his life. He was deeply but not obtrusively religious, and no human being ever heard a low or profane word from his lips.

Such a young man as Thomas Macdonough must make his mark early, and from the first his commanding officers reposed the greatest confidence in him. He was ordered to the Philadelphia, under Captain Bainbridge, when Commodore Preble went out in 1803 to reduce the African pirates. He happened to have been detached from the Philadelphia and in command of a prize at Gibraltar when the unfortunate ship went upon the rocks near Tripoli, October 31, 1803, and he thus escaped the long captivity of his shipmates. He reported promptly to Commodore Preble, and was assigned to the Enterprise, schooner, under Decatur, then a young lieutenant commandant of less than twenty-five years. It may be imagined that no officer in the Mediterranean squadron felt a more ardent desire than Macdonough to rescue Bainbridge and his men and to destroy the Philadelphia.

At last Decatur organized his celebrated expedition in the ketch Intrepid, and among the eleven officers he selected for that glorious enterprise was Macdonough. At that time Macdonough was still a midshipman. He was tall and very

slender, never having been physically strong; but he was, even then, a man for the post of danger.

The ketch set off on the 3d of February from Syracuse and returned on the 19th, having in that time entered the well-guarded harbor of Tripoli by night, burned the Philadelphia at her moorings, and escaped without losing a man. Macdonough was the third man on the Philadelphia's deck, and was especially active in his work of distributing the powder for the ship's destruction in her storerooms aft. No officer in that glorious expedition conducted himself better than Macdonough; and when it is remembered that Decatur commanded it, that James Lawrence was one of his lieutenants, and Charles Morris, who was afterward Captain Hull's first lieutenant in the escape of the Constitution and the capture of the Guerrière, was one of the midshipmen, it will be seen that Macdonough was measured by no common standard.

Macdonough shared in all the glory of those splendid campaigns, and received the thanks and commendations of his superiors, besides promotion. In 1806 he was made first lieutenant of the Siren, one of the smart brigs that had done good service during the Tripolitan war. She was at Gibraltar, where the British navy is always very much in evidence; and Macdonough, the mild and forbearing, soon had a chance of showing the stuff that was in him. One day, while his com-

manding officer, Captain Smith, was on shore, Macdonough noticed a boat going from a heavy British frigate that lay close to an American merchant vessel. When the boat repassed the Siren, on her way back to the frigate, she carried one more man than she had on leaving the frigate. In those days, if a British captain suspected an American merchant vessel of having a British subject among the crew, it was common enough to seize the man, and when once on board a British ship, it mattered little whether he were American or British, there he had to stay. Macdonough suspected this to be the case, and sent a boat to the brig to ask if a man had been taken and if he were an American. Such was actually reported. Macdonough at once ordered the first cutter lowered, and although she pulled only four oars and the British boat pulled eight, he set off in pursuit. He did not catch up with the British boat until she was directly under the frigate's quarter, and the man in the bow had raised his boat-hook. Suddenly Macdonough reached forward, and, catching hold of the prisoner, who sat in the stern sheets, lifted him bodily into the American boat, and before the British could believe their eyes, was well started on his way back to the Siren.

The captain of the frigate had seen the whole affair, and in a rage he jumped into a boat and headed for the Siren. When he reached her the

men of the cutter had gone aboard, and the young lieutenant was calmly walking the quarter-deck. The captain angrily demanded the man, and asked if Macdonough knew the responsibility he was taking upon himself in Captain Smith's absence.

"I will not give up the man, and I am accountable only to the captain of this ship," replied Macdonough.

"I could blow you out of the water at this moment," said the captain.

"No doubt you are perfectly able to do it," answered Macdonough; "but I will never give up that man as long as this ship will float."

"You are a very indiscreet and a very young man," continued the captain. "Suppose I had been in the boat just now?"

"I would have taken the man or lost my life."

"What, sir!" cried the captain; "would you dare to stop me now if I were to get hold of the man?"

"I would, and you have only to try it," was Macdonough's undaunted reply.

The captain, seeing nothing was to be got out of the resolute young lieutenant, left the ship, but was pulled toward the merchant ship. Macdonough had a boat lowered which followed the British boat, watching her until she returned to the frigate. This action not only won the good opinion of the captain and other officers and men

of the Siren, but of many of the British officers as well, who knew how to respect a man of such resolute courage.

Macdonough was ever afterward treated with the utmost consideration and politeness by all the British officers at Gibraltar, including the officers of the overbearing captain.

At the outbreak of the war with Great Britain Macdonough was what was then termed a master commandant. His was not the fortune of Decatur, Stewart, and others of his brave shipmates to seek for glory on the wide ocean, but he was sent into the wilderness, as it were, to create a navy, and to fight the British on the great lakes. He established himself with his seamen and workmen on the shores of Lake Champlain, and began immediately the construction of a fleet. Officers and men worked with the greatest ardor, and the commodore, as Macdonough was now called by courtesy, might often have been seen handling the saw and plane. A corvette, called the Saratoga, and meant for the commodore's flagship, was begun, with several smaller vessels; and so rapidly did they advance that only a few weeks from the time the trees were cut down in the forest the vessels were launched and being made ready for their guns. These had to be dragged many hundreds of miles through a pathless wilderness, such as the northern and western part of New York was then. It was difficult, but

still it could be done. When it came to transporting the cables, though, a point was reached, about forty miles from the lake shore where the vessels were building, when it seemed impossible to move a step farther. There were no roads, and the cables had been brought in ox-wagons, which now came to a complete standstill. No one knew what to do until an old sailor proposed that they should stretch each cable its whole length, and men, stationed ten yards apart, should shoulder it and carry it the forty miles remaining; and this was actually done.

Meanwhile the British had not been idle, and they too, on the other side of the lake, had built a frigate, called the Confiance, that was heavier than the Saratoga, and they had other smaller vessels. Their commanding officer, Captain Downie, was a worthy antagonist of Commodore Macdonough, and about the same age, while the British vessels were manned by seasoned sailors, many of whom had served under Nelson and Collingwood.

Early in September, 1814, both squadrons being ready to fight, Commodore Macdonough chose his position with a seaman's eye, in Plattsburg bay. He knew that his enemy would hunt for him wherever he might be, and he chose to fight at anchor, rightly supposing that the British, through their greater experience, could conduct the evolutions of a squadron better than the

Americans; for, while none could be more daring in action than Macdonough, none was more prudent beforehand. The exact knowledge he had of the elements for and against him explains much of his success.

On the night of the 9th of September, in the midst of storm and tempest, the American squadron made its way up the lake to Plattsburg harbor. The next morning saw it anchored in the admirable order devised by Commodore Macdonough's genius. The flagship, Saratoga, the heaviest ship in the squadron, was in the middle of the line. Ahead of her was ranged the gunbrig Eagle, commanded by Captain Cassin, who had been one of Commodore Preble's midshipmen with Macdonough, eleven years before. The Eagle had shoal water off her beam, so that the head of the line could not be turned. On the other side of the Saratoga was the Ticonderoga, a small sloop-of-war, while beyond her was the little Preble, named for the great commodore, who was no more. There were, besides, ten small gunboats, of which the Eagle was supported by two, the Saratoga by three, the Ticonderoga by two, while the remaining two were to assist the Preble in defending the end of the line. All of the vessels were riding easily at anchor, and all of them were provided with springs to their anchors and kedges, to enable them to change their position at will. The wisdom of

this precaution was shown on the great day for which they were prepared.

On the 11th of September, 1814, a brilliant Sunday morning, just at sunrise, the dazzling white topsails of the British fleet were seen passing along the neck of land called Cumberland Head, which juts into the bay. The American guard-boat pulled in, all hands were called to quarters in the American squadron, and an American ensign was set at every masthead. Then on board the flagship was made the signal for divine service, and Commodore Macdonough, kneeling upon his quarterdeck, surrounded by his officers and in hearing of his men, with every head bared, read the prayers appointed to be read before a fight at sea. After this brief but solemn act all awaited the onset with steadiness and cheerfulness.

It had been suggested to him that he should issue an extra allowance of grog to the men, but he replied, —

"No. My men shall go cool into action; they need no stimulant beyond their native valor."

The American vessels were so skilfully moored that no matter from what quarter the wind was, the British were obliged to approach them "bows on," a very dangerous way to attack a bold and skilful enemy.

The British rounded the headland in noble style. The Confiance was leading, her brave commander, Captain Downie, fatally conspicu-

ous on her deck, his breast covered with medals gloriously earned. Following her, came three smaller vessels, the Finch, the Chubb, and the Linnet, and twelve gunboats, carrying both soldiers and sailors, and each armed with a single long eighteen-pound carronade.

As the four British ships, each on the same tack, neared the American line, the Eagle suddenly roared out a broadside. The shot fell short, and the British squadron came on, with majestic steadiness, without replying, until the Linnet was abreast of the Ticonderoga. Then the Linnet let fly a broadside, of which every shot dropped into the water except one. This one shot, though, struck a chicken-coop on the Ticonderoga's deck and smashed it, letting out a young game-cock, a pet with the Ticonderoga's men. The game-cock, delighted to get his liberty, jumped upon a gun-slide and uttered a long, loud, and defiant crow at the British vessel, which he seemed to think had directed her whole broadside at him. The Americans burst into three ringing cheers, that shook the deck, delighted with the game-cock's courage, which he proved further by flying up into the rigging and crowing vociferously all the time the British were advancing.

The Confiance came on steadily until just abreast of the Saratoga, when Commodore Macdonough himself, sighting a twenty-four pounder,

fired the first effective gun of the battle. It struck the Confiance near the hawse-hole, and ranged the whole length of her deck, doing fearful damage and splintering her wheel. A terrible broadside followed; but the Confiance as if disdaining to answer, moved proudly on to engage at close quarters, and not until the wind became light and baffling did she port her helm about two cables' length from the Saratoga. Then she opened upon the corvette. Her guns were double-shotted, and their effect at close range, in a perfectly smooth sea, was frightful. Meanwhile the Linnet and the Chubb had taken position abeam of the Eagle, and attacked her with great fury. The gunboats had fallen upon the little Preble, and soon drove her out of line, when with the Finch they concentrated their fire upon the Ticonderoga. The gallant little brig gave them plenty to do, and stubbornly defended the end of the line. At one moment the gunboats would advance upon her, the men standing up ready to board her, and would be beaten off in the act of entering her ports or springing upon her decks. Then they would haul off and pour round after round of grapeshot into her. Still the little vessel held out. Captain Cassin was seen coolly walking the taffrail, a target for every shot, but he escaped without a wound, as if by a miracle. At one time all the matches gave out in the division of guns commanded by midshipman Pauld-

ing.[1] This young officer, who was an acting lieutenant, although only sixteen years old, had the wit and readiness to fire his guns by snapping his pistol at the touch-hole.

Nothing could exceed the determined valor with which the Saratoga and the Confiance kept up the fight. The Linnet presently turned her attention to the Saratoga, and poured one raking broadside into her after another, besides what she had to take from the Confiance. The brave Captain Downie had been mortally wounded early in the engagement, but the ship was still admirably fought. On the Saratoga three times the cry went up that Commodore Macdonough was killed, for three times was he knocked senseless to the deck; but each time he rose, none the worse except for a few cuts and bruises.

The guns on the engaged side of the Saratoga became disabled one by one, by the long twenty-fours in the main-deck battery of the Confiance, which, though suffering from the musketry fire of the Americans, was yet doing magnificent work. At last but a single gun of the starboard batteries of the Saratoga remained serviceable, and in firing it the bolt broke, the gun flew off the carriage, and actually tumbled down the hatchway.

The ship was afire in several places, due to the

[1] Afterward Rear-Admiral Paulding.

hot shot poured into her by the Confiance, one-fourth of her men were killed, and she had not a gun available on her engaged side; while both the Confiance and the Linnet were giving her one raking broadside after another. In this awful extremity Commodore Macdonough determined to wind his ship, which means to turn the ship completely around so that she could use her uninjured batteries. This difficult but brilliant manœuvre was executed with the utmost coolness, and soon she sprung a new broadside on the Confiance. The Confiance attempted the same manœuvre, but she only got partly round, when she hung with her head to the wind, in a terrible position, where the fresh batteries of the Saratoga raked her fore and aft. No ship could stand this long and live; and after two hours of as desperate fighting as was ever seen, the Confiance was forced to haul down her colors.

By that time the Finch had been driven out of the fight, and the Chubb had been shot wholly to pieces. The little Linnet, though, alone and single-handed, undauntedly sustained the fight, hoping that some of the gunboats might be able to tow her off. But when the Saratoga had finished with the Confiance, without a moment's loss of time, she turned her broadside on the Linnet, and soon forced her to strike, with her hull riddled like a sieve, her

masts gone, and the water a foot deep in her hold. By midday all was over, and of the sixteen British ensigns that had fluttered proudly in the morning air, not one remained. It was one of the most destructive naval engagements ever fought. In Commodore Macdonough's official report, he says there was not a mast left in either squadron on which sail could be made. Some of the British sailors had been at Trafalgar, and they all agreed that the fighting of that 11th of September had been more severe than at Trafalgar.

The American sailors fought with extraordinary coolness, and many amusing as well as terrible and inspiring things occurred. One old sailor on the Saratoga, who had worked and fought all during the battle and had been slightly wounded several times, was seen mopping his face delightedly while calling out to one of his messmates, "Ay, Jack, this is the best fun I've had this war."

Another, getting a shot through his glazed hat, took it off, and, turning to an officer, said in a tone of bitter complaint, "Look a-here, sir; them Johnny Bulls has spiled my hat. Now, what am I going to do for a hat?"

As soon as the Linnet struck, the British officers, led by Captain Pring, who succeeded Captain Downie in command, came aboard the Saratoga to deliver their swords. All the American officers were assembled on her quarterdeck, and as the British officers approached Commo-

dore Macdonough with their swords extended, he said, with deep feeling, —

"Gentlemen, your gallant conduct makes you the more worthy to wear your swords. Return them to their scabbards."

At once every attention was given the wounded, the officers working side by side with the men. Captain Pring, in his report, says: —

"I have much satisfaction in making you acquainted with the humane treatment the wounded have received from Commodore Macdonough. They were immediately removed to his own hospital at Crab Island, and furnished with every requisite. His generous and polite attention to myself, the officers, and men, will ever be gratefully remembered." All this was quite characteristic of Macdonough, who united the tenderness of a woman with a lion-like courage.

The night of the battle the commodore visited every ship in the squadron, and personally expressed to the officers and men his appreciation of their gallant services that day.

The news of the victory was received all over the country with manifestations of joy. Congress passed the usual resolution of thanks to Macdonough, his officers and men, gave him and his two commanding officers gold medals, silver medals to the lieutenants, and a handsome sword to each of the midshipmen, with a liberal award of prize money to the men. Macdonough was

made a post-captain, his commission dating from the day of the battle.

The State of Vermont gave him an estate overlooking the scene of his victory, and many States and towns made him presents. Macdonough bore all these honors with characteristic modesty and simplicity, and, instead of being elated by them, tears came into his eyes in speaking of what his country had bestowed upon him.

Soon after this peace was declared, and Macdonough returned again to service on the ocean. His health had always been delicate, and as years passed on, it grew more so. But he continued to go to sea, and did his full duty as always. In 1825 he was in command of the glorious old Constitution, as his flagship on the Mediterranean station. She had been splendidly refitted, sailed admirably, both on and off the wind, and, as the sailors said, "looked like a new fiddle." He made his last cruise in this noble ship. His health rapidly declined, and on his way home from the Mediterranean he died and was buried at sea on the 10th of November, 1825.

Few men have enjoyed more national esteem and affection than Macdonough. His career shows that a man may have the softest manners and mildest disposition along with an invincible courage and a high spirit. Macdonough may be taken as the type of a great seaman and a pure and perfect man.

JAMES LAWRENCE.

The name of Lawrence, like that of Somers, is associated with youth, with gallantry, and with misfortune. It was his fate, after many brilliant and heroic successes, to lay down his life and lose his ship; but his colors were hauled down, not by himself, but by the enemy, and his last utterance, "Don't give up the ship," which has become the watchword of the American navy, was literally obeyed. It is remarkable that this unfortunate vessel, the Chesapeake, never was formally surrendered, but was taken possession of and her flag struck by her captors.

James Lawrence was born in Burlington, New Jersey, in 1781. His family were persons of consideration and property, and Lawrence was destined to be a lawyer. He was a remarkably handsome, gentle, and docile boy, and it was a surprise to his family when, at twelve years of age, he developed a passionate desire to enter the newly created navy. He never wavered from this wish, but, being a singularly obedient boy, he agreed to try the study of the law for a time, and applied himself seriously to it for a year or two. In 1798, however, when he was in his eighteenth

JAMES LAWRENCE

year, and when his natural bent was fully indicated, his inclination toward the navy became overpowering. His family wisely released him from the law, which was so distasteful to him, and got him a midshipman's warrant in the navy.

His first service was in the Ganges, a small twenty-four-gun frigate. At the time of his entrance into the navy he was of a noble and commanding figure, of captivating manners, and although somewhat impatient in temper, at heart entirely amiable and generous. From the beginning he was remarkable for his kindness and consideration toward his inferiors. When it was necessary to punish the sailors, and Lawrence had to superintend the punishment, his eyes would fill with tears; and when he became a lieutenant, his popularity with the midshipmen was unbounded. It is told of him that once the midshipmen in Commodore Rodgers's squadron determined to give the commodore a dinner, to which none of the lieutenants were to be invited. All were agreed to leave out the lieutenants, when one of the midshipmen cried, "What! not ask Mr. Lawrence!" The impossibility of leaving Lawrence out seemed patent to all of them; and to make the compliment more marked, he was the only lieutenant asked to meet the commodore.

Lawrence's first service in the Ganges was during the troubles with France. The Ganges

patrolled the seas, and caught several French privateers which made a good resistance, but never got alongside a vessel of equal force.

In 1802 Lawrence went out to the Mediterranean in the Enterprise, as first lieutenant. This gallant little schooner fully sustained her reputation in the operations of Commodore Morris's squadron, which preceded Commodore Preble's by a year. Although the war had just begun, and had not yet assumed the fierce and determined character of the following year, yet the Bashaw had a foretaste in 1803 of what was to befall him in the way of bombardments and boat attacks in 1804. In one of the boat attacks Lawrence volunteered, and his conduct on the occasion won high praise.

The force was under the command of Lieutenant David Porter, first lieutenant of the New York, flagship, who had already distinguished himself against the French, and was destined to make one of the most daring cruises in the history of navies.

The New York, with the Adams, frigate, and the little Enterprise, began the blockade of Tripoli in May, 1803. A number of merchant vessels, protected by gunboats, ran under the batteries of the old part of the town, where they were comparatively safe from ships of the draught of the American squadron. Every preparation was made to defend them, but Porter, Lawrence,

and other brave and daring young spirits determined to make a dash for them and destroy them if possible. Having got the commodore's permission, an attacking party was organized under Porter, with Lawrence as second in command, with three other officers and a number of picked men. On the morning of the attack the boats advanced boldly, in the face of a sharp musketry fire, and succeeded in making a landing. The Tripolitans adopted their usual style of hand-to-hand fighting, but in spite of it the vessels were fired and the Americans retired with slight loss. The Tripolitans, by the most tremendous efforts, put out the fire and saved their vessels; but they discovered that the Americans were disposed to come to close quarters with them, which policy finally brought down the power of the Barbary States.

Lawrence, as well as Porter, was particularly distinguished in this dashing little affair. The next adventure in which Lawrence was engaged was a few weeks after; the Enterprise being under the command of Hull, then a lieutenant commandant. It had been determined to hunt up the Tripolitan ships of war wherever found. The Enterprise was engaged in this service, and on a June morning, very early, the lookouts from the Adams, frigate, observed a signal flying from the Enterprise of "Enemy in sight." A Tripolitan frigate, supported by nine gunboats,

trying to get to sea from Tripoli, had been penned up in a narrow bay by the Enterprise, which, too weak to attack, signalled for her more powerful consort to come to her assistance. The Adams responded promptly, the Enterprise meanwhile maintaining her station with as much daring as if she were a forty-four-gun frigate instead of a twelve-gun schooner. As soon as the wind permitted the Adams to get within range, she opened with terrible effect upon the corsair, which replied vigorously, and did not strike until she had received the fire of the Adams, in smooth water and at short range, for three quarters of an hour. Soon after her colors were hauled down, fire reached her magazine, and she blew up.

It was Lawrence's extreme good fortune, after serving under such a captain as Isaac Hull, to serve next under Decatur. The Argus, one of the four handsome little vessels built for the war with Tripoli, had been sent out under Decatur, who was to exchange her for the Enterprise, Hull's superior rank entitling him to the larger vessel. Yet it is remarkable that the little Enterprise, although distinctly inferior to the other four small vessels, survived every one of them, and had an unbroken career of success both in running and fighting.

As soon as Decatur took the Enterprise, and had got a good look at Tripoli on the reconnoitring expedition made by Commodore Preble in

the early winter of 1803, the idea of the destruction of the Philadelphia and the release of Bainbridge and his companions possessed his mind. It may be imagined that Lawrence ardently sympathized with him, and in his young first lieutenant Decatur recognized a daring and steadfast spirit akin to his own. It was Decatur's habit, in speaking of Lawrence, to say, "He has no more dodge in him than the mainmast," which was true.

In the same month of December the Enterprise captured the ketch Meshouda, which, renamed the Intrepid, was to take part in one of the most glorious successes, and afterward in one of the most heart-breaking tragedies, of the American navy.

In the preparation of the ketch, and in working out the details of his plan, Decatur was ably seconded by his first lieutenant. The expedition for the destruction of the Philadelphia was exactly suited to a man of Lawrence's vigorous and imaginative temperament.

If a precise record remained of that immortal expedition, — the six days of storm and tempest, in which the ketch, ill ventilated and crowded with men who were wet to the skin most of the time and half starved because their provisions were spoiled by salt water, was blown about the African coast, — how surpassingly interesting it would be! It is known, however, that both officers and men

not only kept up their determination, but their gayety. On that February evening when the ketch stole in and made fast to the Philadelphia to destroy her, Lawrence, next to Decatur, bore the most active part. It was he who commanded the boat that put out from the ketch and coolly fastened a hawser to the forechains of the doomed frigate; and it was he who intercepted the frigate's boat and took the fast from it and passed another line from the Philadelphia's stern into the ketch. When Decatur shouted, "Board!" Lawrence was among the first to land on the quarterdeck, and as soon as that was cleared, he dashed below, accompanied by two midshipmen, as intrepid as himself, — Mr. Laws and the indomitable Macdonough, — with ten men, and fired the berth-deck and all the forward storerooms. Nothing is more extraordinary than the quickness and precision with which every order was carried out on that night of glory. Lawrence and his party were in the ship less than twenty-five minutes, yet they were the last to drop into the ketch.[1] On their return after this celebrated adventure, Lawrence received his due share of praise.

There was much hard work to be done by every officer in the squadron before it was ready to attack Tripoli in August, 1804, and Lawrence, as first lieutenant, did his part. Once before Tripoli,

[1] See the biography of Decatur.

there was severe fighting as well as hard work. The fact that Decatur was taken out of his ship so often to lead a division of the boats, left the command of the Enterprise much to Lawrence, and he handled the little schooner in the most seamanlike manner.

In the winter of 1804–5 the government determined to build a number of small gunboats, to renew the attacks on Tripoli in the summer. Some of the lieutenants who had returned to the United States in the changes necessary in the squadron, were selected to take them out to the Mediterranean. Lawrence, who had come back to the United States after spending two years in the Mediterranean, was given the command of one of these little vessels, Number Six, — for they were thought to be too insignificant to name and consequently were merely numbered. They carried a large spread of canvas, but their gunwales were so near the water that they looked rather like rafts than boats. On the way over, Lawrence was sighted by the British frigate Lapwing, which sent a boat to rescue them, supposing them to be on a raft after a shipwreck. Lawrence thanked the officer in charge of the boat, but proceeded on his way.

Commodore Rodgers was then in command of the American force which again appeared before Tripoli in May, 1805; and without firing a gun a treaty of peace and the release of the Phila-

delphia's officers and men were secured. The squadron then sailed for Tunis, where it intimidated the Tunisians into good behavior and negotiated a treaty of peace under the threat of a bombardment.

Soon after most of the vessels returned home. Lawrence recrossed the ocean again in his gunboat, and commanded her for some time after.

On the 22d of June, 1807, occurred the painful and mortifying rencounter of the Chesapeake, frigate, with the British frigate Leopard, one of the most far-reaching events in the American navy. As the name of Lawrence will ever be connected with the unfortunate Chesapeake, the story of that unhappy event can be told here.

The Chesapeake was a comparatively new ship, carrying thirty-eight guns, and was put in commission to relieve the Constitution in the Mediterranean. She seems to have been an unpopular ship from the first, as she was thought to be weak for her size, and was a very ordinary sailer. She was to wear the broad pennant of Commodore James Barron, who had Captain Gordon as his flag captain. Both of these men were esteemed excellent officers.

The Chesapeake was fitted partly at the Washington Navy Yard and partly at the Norfolk Navy Yard. There had been a charge that she had among her crew three deserters from the

British frigate Melampus. The charge had been investigated, however, and found to be a mistake. It was known that the Leopard, of fifty guns, was hanging about outside the capes of Virginia, but it was not suspected that she would attempt to stop the Chesapeake. The British government, arrogant in its dominion over the sea, had claimed and exercised the right of searching merchant vessels; and the United States, a young nation, with a central government which was still an experiment as well as an object of jealousy to the State governments, had submitted from not knowing exactly how to resist. But with a ship of war it was different, and neither the authorities nor the people of the United States dreamed that any attempt would be made to violate the deck of a national vessel.

There seems to have been great negligence in preparing the Chesapeake for sea, and when she sailed she was in a state of confusion, her decks littered up, and none of the apparatus used in those days for firing great guns was available. Neither was her crew drilled, having been at quarters only three times. Her officers were men of spirit, but there seems to have been a fatal laxness in getting her ready for sea.

The Chesapeake, with a good wind, dropped down to Hampton Roads, and was soon stretching out to sea. About noon the Leopard was

discerned, and from the first seemed to be following the Chesapeake. At three o'clock the two, still making for the open ocean, were near enough to speak, and the Leopard hailed, saying she had despatches for Commodore Barron. This was not remarkable, as such courtesies were occasionally exchanged between ships of friendly nations. The Chesapeake hove to, as did the Leopard, close to each other, when the Chesapeake's officers noticed that the British frigate had her guns run out, and was evidently perfectly ready for action. Very soon a boat put off from her, and a lieutenant came aboard the Chesapeake. He went below into the great cabin, and handed Commodore Barron a letter from Vice-Admiral Berkley, dated at Halifax, directing him on meeting the Chesapeake to search her for the three alleged deserters, and offering to allow the Leopard to be searched if desired.

Commodore Barron was a brave man and a good officer in general, but he appears to have been seized with one of those moments of indecision which in a few minutes can wreck a whole life. It is difficult, though, to imagine how one could act judiciously in an emergency so terrible, when the choice lies between submitting to a frightful insult and provoking a conflict which must result in the loss of many gallant and innocent men. The commodore's real

fault was in going to sea in an unprepared condition.

Commodore Barron took about half an hour to deliberate before sending a reply; and as soon as the British boat put off, orders were given to clear the ship for action and get the people to quarters, and Commodore Barron himself went on deck. While this was being done, the Leopard hailed, and fired a gun toward the Chesapeake, followed by a whole broadside, and for about twelve minutes she poured her fire into the helpless Chesapeake. Commodore Barron, a marine officer, and sixteen men were wounded, and three men were killed. Commodore Barron repeatedly ordered a shot to be fired before the ensign was lowered, but there were no means at hand for igniting the powder. At last a young lieutenant named Allen ran to the galley, and, taking a live coal in his fingers, rushed back to the gun-deck and succeeded in firing one of the guns in his division. At that moment the American ensign touched the taffrail.

The Leopard then sent a boat and took possession of the three alleged deserters, and made off, while the disgraced Chesapeake returned to Norfolk.

It is not easy to describe the outburst of indignation which followed this mortifying event. Commodore Barron was court-mar-

tialled, but as it was proved that his mistake was one of judgment, and that he conducted himself well after the danger became imminent, he was merely sentenced to five years' suspension from the navy.

The British government disavowed the action of Captain Humphries of the Leopard, although it did not punish him; but Vice-Admiral Berkley was never again employed in the British navy. It also restored the three men it had taken from the Chesapeake to the deck of the American frigate.

After this affair it began to be plain that the United States must either boldly repulse the efforts of Great Britain in her claims to right of search, or else tamely submit. The latter was not to be thought of. The war of 1812 was fought for the principle of protecting sailors in American ships, and for the right to carry goods in free bottoms; hence its motto was: "Free trade and sailors' rights."

These were agitating times for the navy, as officers of intelligence realized that war was coming and it would be chiefly a naval war; and they therefore strove diligently to perfect themselves in their profession, so that when they came in conflict with the seasoned sailors of England the American navy might give a good account of itself.

Lawrence was among the most earnest and ambitious of these young officers, and he

acquitted himself so well in those intervening years that it was plain he would do well in whatever situation he was placed.

In 1808 he was made first lieutenant of the Constitution, and that was the last subordinate place he held. In 1809 he got the Vixen, which he exchanged for the Wasp, and finally the Argus. In 1811 he got the Hornet, a fast and beautiful little cruiser, carrying eighteen guns, and was in command of her when the long-expected declaration of war came in 1812.

The Hornet and the Essex, under Captain Porter, were ordered to cruise with Captain Bainbridge in the Constitution. But after getting out from Boston in October, 1812, and cruising a few weeks with the Constitution, they separated. The Hornet, being off San Salvador, challenged the Bonne Citoyenne, a vessel of about her own strength, to come out and fight. As the Bonne Citoyenne had a large amount of specie on board which her captain was under orders to deliver, he very properly declined to fight, and was blockaded by the Hornet for nearly three weeks. The Montagu, ship of the line, appearing however, Captain Lawrence thought it time to be off, and managed to slip out to sea in the darkness of an autumn night. He cruised some time, taking a few prizes, and on the 24th of February came in sight of a large man-of-war brig, the Peacock. She was

called "the yacht" from the beautiful brightness and order in which she was kept, and was commanded by Captain Peake, a gallant and skilful officer. The Peacock showed a perfect willingness to fight, and the two vessels stood for each other at once. About five o'clock, being very near each other, their ensigns were hoisted, and the battle began by exchanging broadsides as they passed. After one or two rounds the Hornet came down, her batteries a sheet of flame, and her fire frightfully destructive to her adversary. The Peacock stood the blast of fire a very short time, fifteen minutes being the longest time estimated, — Lawrence afterward said it was eleven minutes by his watch, but, his clerk having put it down fifteen minutes, he allowed it to stand, — when the Peacock lowered her colors and displayed signals of distress in her forerigging. She was in a sinking condition, when a prize crew was thrown aboard; and in spite of every effort on the part of the officers and men of the Hornet, the Peacock went down, carrying nine of her own people and three of the Hornet's. The prize-master of the Hornet and his boat's crew saved themselves with difficulty in the launch.

The Peacock was well handled and fought by her commander, who lost his life in the engagement. But the Hornet was so skilfully manœu-

vred, and her gunnery, besides being extremely accurate, was so rapid, that she had the advantage from a few minutes after the beginning of the combat. She was slightly superior to the Peacock both in men and metal, but the damage she did was far beyond the small difference of strength between her and her antagonist. When the Peacock surrendered, her mainmast had gone by the board, her hull was riddled, and she had six feet of water in her, which soon carried her to the bottom; while, by nine o'clock that night, every injury to the Hornet had been repaired, and she was ready to go into action again.

Lawrence treated his prisoners with characteristic generosity, and his example was not lost on his men. The Peacock's crew had lost everything by the sinking of the ship, and the Hornet's men took up a subscription among themselves to provide each of the prisoners with two shirts, a blue jacket, and trousers.

Finding himself crowded with prisoners, Lawrence stood for home, and arrived at New York late in March, 1813. The officers of the Peacock, on being paroled at New York, addressed him a very handsome letter of thanks, in which they said, "We cannot better express our feelings than by saying that we ceased to consider ourselves prisoners."

The city of New York, anticipating the thanks of Congress, and the gold medal for

Lawrence, with prize money for the crew, gave Lawrence the freedom of the city and a handsome piece of plate. On the 6th of April a great dinner was given at Washington Hall, then a splendid place of entertainment in New York, to Lawrence and his officers, while in the ball-room of the building the petty officers, sailors, and marines of the Hornet were entertained. The sailors landed at Whitehall, and with music playing, marched up Pearl Street, Wall Street, and Broadway to Washington Hall amidst the greatest enthusiasm on the part of the inhabitants. After a fine dinner Captain Lawrence and his officers, accompanied by the members of the city government of New York, visited them, and the party was received by the sailors rising and giving three times three for their commander. The whole body of sailors was afterward invited to occupy the pit at the theatre, with Lawrence and his officers and their hosts in the boxes. The audience cheered the sailors vociferously, and the sailors seem to have cheered everything; and they were highly pleased with their entertainment.

This was the last glimpse of brightness in Lawrence's short life. He had a prospect of getting the Constitution, but his hopes were dashed by being ordered to command the Chesapeake, then fitting at Boston.

The ship had become more and more an object

of dislike in the navy since her unfortunate experience in 1807. Sailors hated her, and would not enlist in her if they could help it. No officer would serve in her if he could get any other ship; consequently she was officered by juniors who had to take her because they could do no better. She had lately returned from a cruise in which she had sailed many thousands of miles, under an active and enterprising captain, without once meeting a chance to distinguish herself, and capturing only a few trifling prizes. Lawrence was dismayed at the offer of this command. He begged to remain in the Hornet rather than go to the Chesapeake. He told his friends that the frigate was a worthless ship, and he would not have her if he could honorably refuse; but this he could not do. In May, 1813, he took command of her. Up to the last moment he hoped to be relieved by Captain Stewart, but it was not to be.

He found the ship short of officers, and those he had very young. His first lieutenant, Augustus Ludlow, was a brilliant young officer, but twenty-one years of age, who had never served before as first lieutenant in a frigate. His other sea lieutenants were midshipmen acting as lieutenants. His crew was largely made up of foreigners; and one, a Portuguese boatswain's mate, was doing what he could to spread

dissatisfaction among the men because they had not been paid the small amount of prize money due from the last cruise. The marine guard was made up wholly of Americans, and there were a few men from the Constitution. These men afterward gave a good account of themselves.

Outside the harbor of Boston it was known that the Shannon, a fine thirty-eight-gun frigate, lay in wait for the Chesapeake. Her commander, Captain Philip Broke, was one of the best officers in the British navy, and had had the ship seven years. He had not followed the example of so many British captains who neglected gunnery practice with their crews, and paid dearly for their rashness with their ships and sometimes with their lives. Captain Broke was a chivalrous man, and, desiring to engage the Chesapeake on equal terms, wrote Captain Lawrence a letter, proposing a meeting any time within two months in any latitude and longitude he might choose. Unfortunately, this letter never reached Lawrence. On the first day of June, 1813, the Shannon stood in toward President's Roads, expecting an answer from Lawrence to Captain Broke's challenge. Lawrence, however, took the Shannon's appearance as a challenge, and, lifting his anchor, made sail to meet her.

As soon as the anchor was up, Lawrence

had a flag hoisted with the inscription "Free trade and sailors' rights." He then made a short address to his men, which was coldly received, not a cheer being raised at the prospect of meeting the enemy.

The ship was cleared for action, and as she passed out, the Shannon was waiting for her on an easy bowline. Both ships proceeded under a good breeze until about thirty miles beyond Boston Light. They then came together under short fighting canvas, and in the manœuvring for a few moments Lawrence was in position to rake his enemy; but whether it escaped him, or he preferred to fight it out alongside, is not known.

A few minutes before six, the ships being fairly alongside, and not more than fifty yards apart, the Shannon fired her first broadside, and was immediately answered by the Chesapeake. The effect of these first broadsides in smooth water and close range was terrific. Three men at the Chesapeake's wheel were shot down one after another. Within six minutes her sails were so shot to pieces that she came up into the wind and was raked repeatedly. In a short while Captain Lawrence was shot in the leg, but kept the deck. Mr. White, the sailing-master, was killed, and Mr. Ludlow, the first lieutenant, Lieutenant Ballard, Mr. Brown, the marine officer, and the boatswain were all mor-

tally wounded. The Shannon had not escaped scatheless, although the execution aboard of her was not to be mentioned with the Chesapeake's. Some of the British frigate's spars and sails being shot away, she fell aboard her antagonist, and the two ships were prevented from drifting apart by the fluke of an anchor on the Shannon hooking in the Chesapeake's rigging. Captain Broke immediately ordered the ships lashed together. This was done by the Shannon's boatswain, who had his arm literally hacked off in doing it, but who did not flinch from his task.

As soon as Captain Lawrence saw the ships were fast, he ordered the boarders called away. But instead of this being done by the boatswain, the bugler, a negro, was called upon to sound his bugle. The man, in a paroxysm of terror, had hid under a boat, and when found was perfectly unable to sound a note. The remaining officers on the Chesapeake's deck shouted for the boarders, and at this moment the gallant Lawrence, conspicuous from his commanding figure, and wearing his full uniform, fell, shot through the body. As he was being carried below, he uttered those words which are a part of the heritage of the American navy, "Don't give up the ship."

The carnage on the Chesapeake's deck was now frightful, and the men began to flinch from

their guns. Captain Broke, seeing this, gave the order to board, and, himself leading the boarders with great intrepidity, sprang upon the Chesapeake's quarterdeck. At this the Portuguese mate and some other mercenaries threw the berth-deck gratings overboard, and ran below, crying, "So much for not paying men prize money!"

A young lieutenant, coming up from the gun-deck, was seized with a panic, and, throwing his pistol down, ran below in a cowardly manner.[1] But there were still gallant souls left upon the unfortunate frigate's deck. Mr. Livermore, the chaplain,— the only officer on deck when the British entered the ship, — advanced boldly, firing his pistol at Captain Broke, and made a brave defence, although his arm was nearly cut from his body by Broke in defending himself. The few marines who were left fought desperately, and severely wounded Captain Broke. All of these men were Americans, and were cut down to a man. The officers of the gun-deck tried to rally the men below, and succeeded in inducing the few Americans to follow them above; the brave Ludlow, in fearful agony from his wounds, struggled up the hatchway. But it was too late, and they were soon overpowered. The flag had been hauled down by the triumphant enemy; the ship was theirs. The

[1] He was promptly dismissed the navy for cowardice on this occasion.

battle lasted only about fifteen minutes, and seldom in the history of naval warfare has there been more dreadful slaughter. The Chesapeake suffered most, her captain and three lieutenants, her marine officer, her sailing-master, boatswain, and three midshipmen being killed, and her few remaining officers wounded. She lost, besides, one hundred and thirty-six men killed and wounded. The Shannon had her captain badly wounded, and lost several officers, and had seventy-five men killed and wounded.

The English ensign was immediately hoisted over the American, and as soon as possible sail was made for Halifax. Lawrence and his wounded officers lay together in the ward room of the Chesapeake, the cabin having been much shattered. For four days Lawrence lingered in extreme anguish. He bore his sufferings with silent heroism, and it is remarkable that he never spoke except to make known the few wants that his situation required. On the Shannon Captain Broke lay, raving with delirium from his wounds, and only occasionally rational. At these times he would ask anxiously after Lawrence, muttering, "He brought his ship into action in gallant style," and other words of generous admiration. When it was known that Lawrence was no more, it was thought best to keep it from Broke, as it was known it would distress him greatly.

On Sunday, the 6th of June, the two ships

entered Halifax harbor, the body of Lawrence wrapped in the battle flag of the Chesapeake, and lying on her quarterdeck. The people took the Chesapeake for the President, and shouting multitudes lined the shores and docks. But when it was known that it was Lawrence's ship, and her brave commander lay dead upon her, an instant silence fell upon the people. They remembered Lawrence's kindness to the officers and men of the Peacock, and they paid him the tribute of silent respect.

The funeral was arranged for the 8th of June, and was one of the most affecting ever witnessed. The British naval and military authorities omitted nothing that could show their esteem for a brave and unfortunate enemy. The garrison and the fleet turned out their whole force, the officers wearing crape upon the left arm. The coffin, wrapped in the Chesapeake's flag, with the dead officer's sword upon it, was brought ashore in an admiral's barge, the men rowing minute strokes, and amid the solemn booming of minute guns. It was followed by a long procession of man-of-war boats. It was landed at King's Wharf, where six of the oldest British captains acted as pall-bearers. The procession to the churchyard of St. Paul's was very long. The American officers were chief mourners, followed by the officers of the Shannon; and the presence of the wounded among both the Ameri-

can and English officers was touching in the extreme. Admiral Sir Thomas Saumerez, one of Nelson's captains, and the officers of the fleet, and the general of the forces, with the officers of the garrison, came next in the procession, followed by a large number of the most respectable citizens of Halifax. The route was lined with troops, and the funeral was like that of a great and distinguished British admiral, — so great is the respect all generous minds must feel for a character like Lawrence's.

His young first lieutenant, Ludlow, survived several days after landing; but he, too, soon followed his captain to a hero's grave. Great honors were also paid him at his interment.

The Americans, however, could not allow the British to pay all the honors to the dead Lawrence, and in August his remains and those of his faithful lieutenant were transferred to Salem, in Massachusetts, where they were temporarily buried until they could be transferred to New York. Lawrence's pall was carried then by six American captains, among whom were Hull, Stewart, and Bainbridge, — all men who had known Lawrence, and served with him when he was a dashing and brilliant young midshipman. Eventually, both Lawrence and Ludlow were buried in Trinity churchyard, New York, where they still rest. Lawrence left a young wife and two children, for whom the country provided.

A poignant regret for Lawrence's misfortunes and death was felt by the country generally. His youth, — he was but thirty-one years of age, — his brilliant career, the charming generosity of his nature, and the graces of his person and manner made him beloved and admired. His fault — if fault it was — in seeking an action when his ship was new to him and ill manned and scantily officered, was that of a high and daring spirit, and was readily condoned; while to this day the story of the Chesapeake is painful to a true American.

At the battle of Lake Erie Perry's flagship bore the name of Lawrence; but, like Lawrence himself, was unfortunate, and, after being cut to pieces, was forced to strike. Another vessel was named the Lawrence; but ships whose names are associated with harrowing events are not favorites with either officers or men, and she was borne upon the navy list for only a few years. But the name and fame of Lawrence will last with his countrymen as long as the American flag flies over a ship of war, and the pity of his fate will ever be among the most moving incidents in American history.

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